

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA



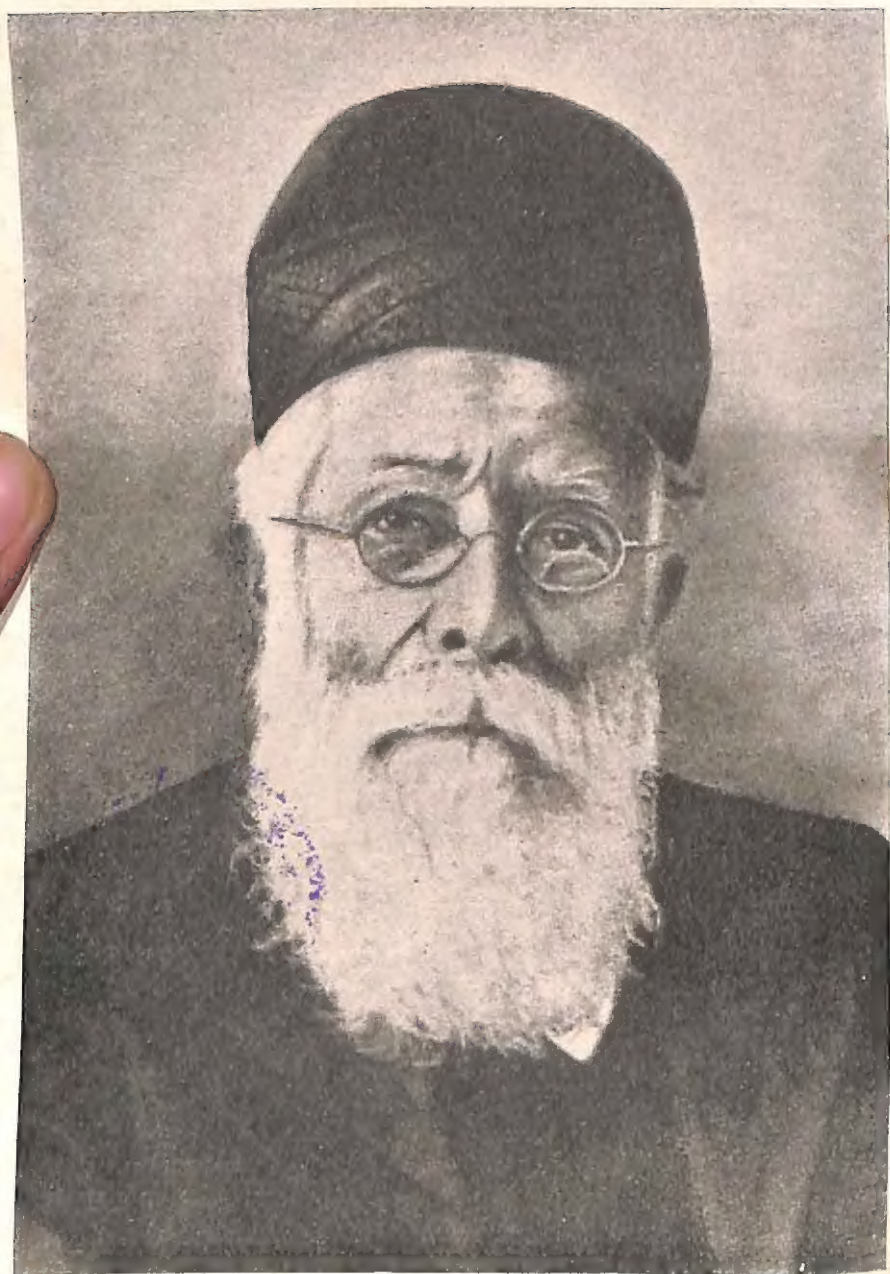
**DADABHAI  
NAOROJI**

R. P. MASANI

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*Builders of Modern India*

# DADABHAI NAOROJI

*by*

R. P. MASANI



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## INTRODUCING THE SERIES

This is the first publication in our Series entitled "Builders of Modern India".

The object of the Series is the publication of biographies of those eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the struggle for independence.

It is a matter of regret that, except in a few cases, no authoritative biographies are available. It is essential for the present and coming generations to know something about these great men and women. The Series has been planned to remove this lacuna. It is proposed to publish handy volumes containing simple and short biographies of our eminent leaders written by competent persons who know their subject well. The books in the Series will be of between 200 to 300 pages and are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace more elaborate biographies.

Though desirable, it may not be possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to persons who are well equipped to do so and, therefore, for practical reasons, it is possible that there might be no historical sequence observed. I hope, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this Series.

I am grateful to my esteemed friend, Shri R. R. Diwakar, former Governor of Bihar, for agreeing to take up the onerous task of general editorship of this Series. Shri Diwakar's experience as a writer, as an editor and as a journalist, and his eminence in these fields, will help in getting the best possible books published in the Series.

I am glad that the first book in the Series is the life of the Grand Old Man of India, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, by Shri R. P. Masani. As a life-long student of Dadabhai, Shri Masani is eminently qualified to write on the subject.

A list of works that are being taken in hand immediately is printed separately.

B. V. KESKAR

NEW DELHI

25th November 1959



## PREFACE

During a few years before Dadabhai's death I used to see him, as his next-door neighbour, in his quiet retreat at Versova. It then occurred to me that there was a splendid opportunity for me to sit at his feet, listen to reminiscences of a life so simple and noble, so eventful and beneficent, as his from his own lips, and to sift in his presence and under his guidance the Cyclopean correspondence, notes, memoranda and other carefully preserved material pertaining to his manifold public activities extending over seven decades. I could not then claim intimate knowledge of the political history of the period nor had I any pretensions to literary merit. It would have been, therefore, presumptuous on my part to offer to write his biography, although I could not conceal from myself the stirrings of a longing to attempt it, if given a chance. One day, I ventured to unburden my mind to a colleague of Dadabhai with a view to ascertaining whether he thought I could be of any assistance in connection with the Grand Old Man's biography. He told me that Gokhale intended writing it and that he had arranged to collect the necessary material with the help of an assistant. Dadabhai could not certainly have had a more well-informed or gifted biographer. But Gokhale predeceased Dadabhai before he had time even to look at the immense mass of material available at Dadabhai's residence.

Soon afterwards my official duties and responsibilities increased beyond expectation and, despite early retirement from the service of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay with a view to devoting my time to literary pursuits, particularly to Dadabhai's biography, other unexpected duties devolved on me, rendering it impossible for me to find time to examine the enormous collection of fading and crumbling papers and printed material, awaiting a biographer. I was hoping all the while that someone would come forward to undertake the work, but although twenty-three years

had rolled by since the death of the Grand Old Man of India, there was no move in that direction. Meanwhile his monumental nation-building work and his crusade for self-government appeared to have been forgotten. I, therefore, decided to devote my whole time and undivided attention to the work during the year 1938.

The political situation in India at the time, and the outlook, were profoundly interesting. There was a truce between the Congress and the rulers. After years of non-co-operation and boycott of councils, the national organization was persuaded to lift the ban on council entry. Congress ministries commenced functioning in several provinces in the year 1937. That epoch-making change in the policy of the Congress marked the beginning of an era of national government, opening out a vast vista of possibilities for co-operation between the people and the Government and peaceful progress towards the goal of *swaraj*. It was, therefore, the most opportune moment, both for India and for Britain, to make Dadabhai live again and revivify his stirring words of reproof as well as of hope. It was just the time when the two countries *must* find themselves united in purpose if they were to render their connection a blessing to both, as Dadabhai had hoped and prayed throughout his life. Several burning problems of his times were still the burning problems of the day. The story of his untiring effort for peaceful and orderly progress, hampered at every stage, for more than fifty years, by an unimaginative bureaucracy, had then a lesson for Britain and India writ in tears. The possibilities of fruitful co-operation rendered it necessary to relate the story of his life in a full-length biography, incorporating as much of his numerous speeches and voluminous memoranda, statements and correspondence as could be useful and helpful to the administrators, politicians and legislators of the day.

The situation is now completely transformed. The strategic changes in the position of various countries, caused by the global war which broke out soon after the biography was published in the year 1939, spelt the end of the domination of one country by another. After the termination of



the war the British Government wisely decided to hand over power to the people and withdraw from the country as soon as possible. Many controversial problems and episodes of Dadabhai's lifetime have, therefore, lost the significance they had in 1938. But the story of Dadabhai's exemplary life and character has yet many an important lesson for the politicians and administrators of our country. It shows what a single patriotic son of India could accomplish despite heavy odds in a long life devoutly dedicated to the service of the motherland and mankind in general. Particularly in these days, when the crying need of the hour is mutual understanding between the nations of the world, what Dadabhai did and achieved with remarkable patience to remove misunderstandings and to cement the friendship not only between Great Britain and India but also between the East and the West has a moral which cannot be too strongly emphasized. For the existing international atmosphere, poisoned by intolerance, distrust and hatred, such an antidote as mutual understanding, goodwill and friendship has a supreme value.

I am grateful to Shri R. R. Diwakar, General Editor of the BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA Series, for the invitation to write this story of Dadabhai's life for the Series. My thanks are also due to Messrs. Allen & Unwin, Publishers of the full-length biography of Dadabhai, for permission to make such use of the book as may be necessary for this popular Life. It has saved an octogenarian much time and trouble to rewrite or paraphrase much of what he wrote twenty years ago. I am also beholden to Shri B. K. Karanjia for reading the proofs.

R. P. M.

*December 31, 1958*

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## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD

SEPTEMBER 4, 1825, will ever remain a memorable day in history as the birthday of a great son of India, universally loved and adored by the people as the Grand Old Man of India, the Father of Indian Nationalism and the Herald of a Self-governing India. In England, it was the reign of King George IV; in India, the East India Company, though still a trading corporation, held sway. The policy of the British Parliament was to assert the rights of the King of England and to establish in India institutions by which those rights might be maintained. But the Company's servants, both civil and military, seemed to regard the sovereignty of India as their own private property and frowned upon the King's Judges sent to each of the three Presidency towns, Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, as the agents of the British Crown to act as a check on the Company and enforce justice and fair dealing.

It is difficult now to visualize how backward, how mis-governed India was in the early years of the nineteenth century. The representatives of the East India Company were endeavouring to keep out their own fellow countrymen and maintain the Company's monopoly of Indian trade, with no higher aim than of getting rich as quickly as possible. The population of the country was sunk in ignorance and superstition. Human sacrifices were callously offered to gods and goddesses. Thousands of unfortunate widows were burnt with their deceased husbands, leaving orphan children behind, some of them children themselves. Bands of highwaymen and professional assassins moved about with impunity. The rulers of the day sought to escape criticism of their maladministration by abolishing the freedom of the newspapers which they feared. A Governor of a province



could threaten to attack and deport even the Commander-in-Chief of the King's troops if he should attempt to enforce the writ of the King's Judges whom he styled "quill-driving lawyers".\*

Those were dark days indeed. But they were soon followed by the dawn of an era of enlightened liberalism when an increasing number of Englishmen in England and not a few among the officers of the Company in India were filled with a deep sense of their duty and responsibility. Their ideas of government were cast in the loftiest mould. The greatness of Britain, they held, should rest not on the acquisition of gold or territory or glory, but on the happiness of the Indian people.

Of these the most outstanding was Mountstuart Elphinstone, the hero of Kirkee in the "Mahratta wars" and subsequently Governor of Bombay. His seniors, Munro, Malcolm, Bentinck, Metcalfe, had stressed in no uncertain terms the obligations which lay upon the rulers, but none did it so emphatically and endeavoured so zealously to translate into action the policy advocated by them to train and prepare the people for self-government, as he did. While, however, he was writing minute after minute in favour of education of the people and speculating as regards the fate of the Empire and the most desirable death for it to die of—the improvement of the people reaching "such a pitch as would render it impossible for a foreign nation to retain the government"—he could have hardly dreamt that even before he would lay down the reins of office as Governor of Bombay, India would be blest with a son destined to quicken the march of the people towards the goal of self-government which then seemed to him to be "at an immeasurable distance".

That son of destiny was Dadabhai. His father, Naoroji Palanji Dordi, a poor Parsi priest, then lived with his wife Maneckbai in a lowly house in Khadak in Bombay. They named him Dadabhai. In that name he carried, so to say, his lofty destiny. To be the *Dada* (grandpapa) not only of

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\*Kaye's *Life of Malcolm*, p. 525

all the young students who came under his spell, but also the entire population of India; and the *bhai* (brother) unto all, alike, was the mission of his life.

It is interesting to reflect what made the Parsi parents select a Hindu name for the child. The Parsis of India have been refugees in the country for more than twelve centuries ever since a band of followers of the faith of the Prophet Zarathushtra migrated from Iran to India after the Arab victory of Iran. This, however, was not the first contact of Iranians with Indians. But neither the refugees nor the Hindu prince who extended to them the hospitality of his country appeared to have had any idea of the relations which had subsisted between Iran and India, commercial, cultural and political, for more than a thousand years before the advent of the refugees. Nor did they seem to be aware of the fact that in the dim old days the ancestors of the people of both the countries lived together in their ancient land, called *Airyana-Vaejah*, the cradle land of the Aryans, not yet definitely located, as one race, spoke the same language, professed the same faith, shared the same beliefs and traditions and followed the same customs. Growth in population, severity of the northern winter and other causes, including difference of opinion over religious convictions, led to their separation. The trend of migration in wave after wave continued southward. Of these, at a later period, about 2000 B.C., a group living in eastern Iran crossed the Hindu Kush and entered the Punjab, and thence spread towards the Gangetic valley in which developed civilized Hindu kingdoms. Had those refugees from Iran been aware of this ancestral history, they could have asked for protection from their brethren in India on grounds of blood relationship. But although they sought shelter as foreigners professing a different faith, no racial antipathy stood in their way. Nor has communal or group prejudice in any form or guise marred their even tenor of life or hindered their progress in their own way. It is a remarkable episode in the history of India that the handful of immigrants from Iran were received with arms outstretched by the popula-

tion of India and that since that date they have lived as good neighbours with the varied sections of the people in Gujarat and other parts of the country to which they spread in course of time, readily adopting the Hindu way of life and customs and allowing even some of their religious ceremonies to be influenced by Hindu rites to such an extent that a Parsi could hardly be distinguished from a Hindu by name or by costume, by religious rite or mode of life.

It is not, therefore, surprising that Dadabhai received a Hindu name signifying what he became in after life, the Dada (Grand Old Man) of India, the title with which his countrymen loved to honour him. To love and serve Mother India as none of her sons had done before him, to get grey in her service and still to knock at the door of the rulers for the redress of her wrongs, to awaken his countrymen to their rights, to teach them to be free, was the mission of his life; and, in the twilight of old age, to see them running on the tracks laid by him, its fulfilment.

"Is it vanity", he once asked, "that I should take a great pleasure in being hailed as the Grand Old Man of India? No, that title, which speaks volumes for the warm, grateful and generous hearts of my countrymen, is to me, whether I deserve it or not, the highest reward of my life."

Dadabhai's father had made Bombay his home. His ancestors, however, had domiciled themselves in Navsari, a small town in the territory of the Gaekwar of Baroda, originally known as *Nagmandal*, or snake-land. Finding its climate as salubrious as that of Sari, an ancient city of Iran, the early settlers of the town called it Navsari, the New Sari. Soon the place became the stronghold of a section of Parsi priesthood in Western India whose descendants feel proud, till this day, to call themselves *Noshakras*. What makes them so proud of this religious centre of the community is that it has produced some of the most learned prelates, *dasturs*, and headmen, *desais*, who rendered eminent services to the Gaekwars, the State and society, owned extensive territories and enjoyed great prerogatives, and that it has been the birth-place of many an eminent Indian such as Jamsetji Tata.



The branch of the Dordi family to which Dadabhai belonged, owned an estate in Dharampore State, about twenty miles from Navsari, where his grandfather and father, before he migrated to Bombay, were engaged in agricultural pursuits. The family record shows a long, unbroken chain of priests tracing their descent from Zarhost Mobed, the first Parsi priest to arrive in Navsari. Dadabhai lost his father when he was only four years old. Had he lived until his son reached the age of initiation, he would have considered it a sacred duty to bring him up as a *mobed* (priest). It is pleasing to speculate how in that event Dadabhai might have devoted himself to the religious interests of the Parsi community with the zest of a reformer even more fervid than the spirit of patriotism which marked his advocacy of the secular interests of his motherland. How vehemently would he have denounced religious prejudices, bigotries, heresies and injustices instead of the economic disabilities and political wrongs and iniquities against which he raised his powerful voice throughout his life! The regeneration of the country was, however, of far greater moment than the reformation of a particular creed or the spiritual progress of a particular community. It seems, therefore, providential that Dadabhai should have made the first gap in the family record of uninterrupted priestly service and should have become the high priest of Indian nationalism.

Navsari is famous for its fragrant flowers and perfumes, "the like of which", says Abul Fazl, the historian, "is nowhere to be found". One of the ancestors of Dadabhai, Chandji Kamdin, had the reputation of making the best perfumes in his day. His fame travelled from Navsari to Delhi. It was a very difficult journey in those days when there were no roads and no railways. Nevertheless reports of the excellence of his perfumes reached the ears of Nur Jehan Begum, the gifted wife of Emperor Jehangir. She was anxious to know the recipe. An invitation was thereupon sent to Chandji to proceed to Delhi with his perfumes. He left for Delhi accordingly and laid at the feet

of the Emperor jars of four select varieties of *attar* (perfume). In return he was entertained as a royal guest and was granted a hundred bighas of land with the title of Mulla Jamasp. Dadabhai was asked in the year 1881 by a journalist whether this traditional account was correct. The laconic reply, characteristic of the man, was: "I am unable to say till I see all the documents pertaining to the matter." Never to accept a statement without verification, never to make a statement without being convinced that it was true, was the rule of his life. It was left to Jivanji Modi, famous Oriental scholar, to examine the documents and sift all evidence, including the *firman* issued by Jehangir announcing the grant of land, exempt from all taxes, to testify that except in regard to some details the family tradition and history go together. Chandji was one of the Hindu names then current among the Parsis. While granting the *firman*, Jehangir substituted for it the Iranian name Jamasp.

A curious origin has been suggested for the family name Dordi. One day some Parsi priests of Navsari went to a dinner. An ancestor of Dadabhai's family, Behramji Mehernosji, turned up rather late and tried to conceal himself, or, according to another account, perambulated the place in search of a seat. One of the company, thereupon, ejaculated: "Why are you twisting and turning like a *dordi* (rope made of coir)?" Thereafter the name stuck to the man and his descendants. There is a confusion of names and dates in the traditional account. Perhaps the name was given to some headstrong member of the family for his inflexibility of decision and tenacity of purpose, qualities which Dadabhai inherited and displayed in an eminent degree.

An illustration of such tenacity was Dadabhai's stupendous struggle to enter the House of Commons. When he appeared to be leading a forlorn hope in carrying on his election campaign, undeterred by repeated reverses, and nursed the constituency of Central Finsbury in spite of the opposition of the Executive or his own Liberal Party, one of his British friends, W. A. Chambers, keenly interested in his success, called on him. A member of a leading firm

of architects in Bombay, he was well known for his sympathy with Indian leaders in their struggle for freedom and was also a voter in Central Finsbury. In the course of his conversation with him, about the prospects of success in the contest despite the attitude of the officials of the Liberal Party, Dadabhai warmed up and exclaimed: "They think they can keep down the mild Hindu (meaning himself), but I will teach them a lesson. I will stick to the constituency." He did, indeed, stick to it, and conquered.

There are no nursery annals to show how little Dady blossomed into brilliant boyhood. In some of the reminiscences of his childhood, he tells us: "One of the first fancies which took possession of my mind as a little child was that as my father was dead the moon, like other friends, was in sympathy with me. And whether I went to the front or back of the house, the moon always seemed to go with me. I liked sympathy then and like it now."

Dadabhai's mother splendidly rose to the occasion. Illiterate though she was, her natural intelligence and resourcefulness were remarkable. She was, as he used to recall in later life, his constant companion, nurse, teacher, and guardian-angel and continued to be the good genius of his life for fifty years. Although the shadow of poverty hung over the household, she sent him to school and toiled for his maintenance. In a brief account of his early life which he contributed to "*The Days of my Youth*" column in O'Connor's journal *M. A. P.*, in the year 1901, he observed:

There is one who, if she comes last in this narrative, has ever been first of all, my mother. Widowed when I, her only child, was an infant, she voluntarily remained a widow, wrapped up in me, her everything in the world. She worked for her child, helped by a brother. Although illiterate, and although all love for me, she was a wise mother. She kept a firm hand upon me. She was the wise counsellor of the neighbourhood. She helped me with all her heart in my work for female education and other social reforms against prejudices of the day. She made me what I am.

The same account gives interesting details of his childhood. The East India Company, then engrossed in



consolidating the conquered territories, gave no thought to the education of the people. Thanks to the lead given by Mountstuart Elphinstone, a society was founded in Bombay called the "Native Education Society" under his patronage to make a beginning with a school in two branches, English and Vernacular. "The Mehtaji (teacher) of my indigenous school", says Dadabhai, "did not know very much about the experiment of the Native Education Society. But it was enough for him that it was conducted under Government auspices. So he sent his son to the school and persuaded my mother to send me also, and this was the foundation of my whole life career. Education was then entirely free. Had there been levied the fees of the present day, my mother would not have been able to pay them. This incident made me an ardent advocate of free education and of the principle that every child should have the opportunity of receiving all the education it is capable of assimilating, whether it is born poor or with a silver spoon in its mouth."

The following reminiscences are also worth recalling :

Being quick at multiplication tables and at mental arithmetic, and being also little of size and fair of colour, I was a regular 'exhibition boy' at my indigenous or native school. On special occasions all the boys of the school used to be lined up in the open by the side of the road, and there, surrounded by crowds of people, I, along with other little boys, was smartly exercised in mental gymnastics amid the loud *wawas* (cries of bravo) of the admiring audience.

Owing to the fairness of my complexion, and, I think I may say, prettiness of my little limbs, I was also always an object of show at weddings, processions, etc., generally appearing as an English general or admiral, or in some gorgeous Indian royal or court dress of brocade. Fond parents and friends of the child thus exhibited used to say of him: 'Oh, he is my dear Jonglo (Englishman)!' Little did I dream then that I should spend much of my manhood and older life in the country of the Jonglos and don their dress in reality. I was particularly reminded of these days of processions and my childish joy in the different dresses I wore, especially the English court dress, when, in court dress, I formed one of the deputation from the Committee of the Imperial Institute, who received the late Queen Victoria on the occasion of the opening of that building. I well remember how the thought passed through my mind: 'Here I am, a real courtier now!'

Another reminiscence of his childhood Dadabhai gives upon the authority of his mother, not from recollection. "According to my mother", he says, "whenever any boy used bad language to me, I used to reply, 'Your bad words will remain in your mouth.'"

The awakening of the soul came to me when I was about fifteen. I remember, as if it were only yesterday, how at a certain spot on a certain road I made a vow never to use low language. From that time forward, as my education advanced, other resolutions to do this and not to do that followed, and I think I may say that I faithfully adhered to them.

Then comes a startling confession :

As a boy I was accustomed to have my little drink before dinner. One day, there was no liquor in the house, and I was sent to have my drink at a shop opposite. Never did I forget the shame and humiliation I felt at being there. It was enough. The drink shop never saw my face again."

How at a school exhibition he deprived a jackdaw of his borrowed feathers, he recalls in the following words :

I remember at one of the school examinations a fellow-pupil, having learned the 'ready reckoner' by heart, carried off the prize I had expected. But at the distribution of prizes, when questions outside the book were asked, he faltered and broke down. I seized the opportunity, rushed out of the ranks, and answered. There and then an English gentleman among the company gave me a prize, and Mrs. Postans, the lady traveller, who was also present, has made a special note of the incident in her book *Western India*.

In this book Mrs. Postans describes Dadabhai as a little Parsi lad "with an overhanging forehead and small sparkling eyes," which "peculiarly attracted attention". "The moment a question was proposed to the class", she writes, "he quickly took a step before the rest, contracted his brows in deep and anxious thought and with parted lips and fingers eagerly uplifted towards the master, rapidly worked his problem and blurted out the solution with a startling haste. The little fellow seemed wholly animated with a desire of excelling, and his mental capabilities promised him a rich reward."

Before we come to the days of higher education, an interesting event in Dadabhai's life has to be recorded. Infant marriages were then the rule among Parsis, as they were

among Hindus. The earlier the age at which a mother succeeded in securing a husband for her girl, the greater was her exultation. Marriages were even arranged, in rare cases, in anticipation of the birth of a bride or bridegroom, and Dadabhai would have been a good-for-nothing fellow had his mother failed to secure a wife for him before he was in his teens. We, therefore, find him married during his eleventh year to Gulbai, daughter of Sorabji Shroff, aged seven.



## CHAPTER II

### STANDARD-BEARER OF REFORMS

WHEN Mountstuart Elphinstone relinquished his office as Governor of Bombay a large sum was raised by the Princes and people of India for the foundation of "professorships for teaching the youths of the country the language, literature, sciences and moral philosophy of Europe". The college classes were subsequently amalgamated with the school classes conducted by the Native Education Society and the combined school and college was named the Elphinstone Institution. One day when Assistant Professor Bal Gangadhar Shastree visited Dadabhai's class to select half a dozen boys for a new college class of the Institution, Dadabhai was one of the students declared fit for the higher form.

It was at the Elphinstone Institution in those pre-university days that Dadabhai learnt to commune with the best minds in the realm of literature and profit by the study of the life and labours of the heroes of the world. Here dawned on him the consciousness of the debt he owed to society. "The literature I had most to do with and most enjoyed", says he, "was of course English. Watts' *Improvement of the Mind* settled my style and mode of thought—never two words when one was enough, clearness of thought and diction. So I bade farewell to the fine and flowery." This made him a writer and a speaker always comprehensible to the simplest minds. "As education advanced", he adds, "thought gradually developed itself in different directions. I realized that I had been educated at the expense of the poor, to whom I myself belonged, so much so that some of my school books came from a well-to-do classmate, a Cama, one of the family with whom I was destined subsequently to have so much to do in public and private life. The thought developed

itself in my mind that as my education and all the benefits arising therefrom came from the people, I must return to them the best I had in me. I must devote myself to the service of the people."

During those happy college days, Dadabhai was the pride of his professors and fellow students. In appearance he was handsome, with singularly bright eyes; in his movements, agile and alert; in character and demeanour, upright and estimable. Academic honours crowned his career, giving unmistakable indication of remarkable vigour of intellect and clearness of thought and judgment.

His teachers were not slow to discern in him the lineaments of the man. Professor Orlebar called him "The Promise of India". Subsequent events justified the prophesy. "The Promise of India" was to be the first in many fields—the first Indian professor, the first to found several organizations for the social, intellectual and political uplift of the people of India, the first Indian M.P., the first Indian to sit on a Royal Commission, appointed in response to his own demands to secure financial justice for his country, and, above all, the first and foremost Indian to claim self-government for his countrymen.

Greatly impressed by his career, the Chief Justice of the day, Sir Erskine Perry, who happened to be the President of the Board of Education, suggested that Dadabhai should be sent to England to be a barrister. It needed a fortune. The large-hearted judge offered to contribute half the expenses, provided the other half was donated by the elders of the Parsi community. The proposal was first welcomed by some of the leaders of the community, but in view of the proselytising activities of the missionaries in those days, which had led to the conversion of two Parsi lads to Christianity, the feelings of the community were so outraged that it was impossible for the elders to respond to the Chief Justice's generous gesture. For the time being it seemed Dadabhai had lost a golden opportunity. The humble chair of "Head Native Assistant Master" was all that could be offered to him on the completion of his acade-

mic career. By that time, however, he had come perilously near the portals of the Government Secretariat. The Secretary to the Board of Education had secured for him an appointment in the Bombay Secretariat. Dadabhai was on the point of accepting it, but, fortunately, sage advice of some of the professors saved him from a post where he would have been bound down to the narrow outlook of a subordinate official.

The Assistant Master's place was a stepping-stone to the post of Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Two years thereafter Dadabhai was elevated to the chair of Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, the first Indian to hold the office. The enthusiasm with which the public hailed the appointment was shared by Government. They congratulated the Board of Education on having seen in the honourable distinction conferred on Dadabhai a fulfilment of the hope expressed by the founders of the professorships, nearly thirty years earlier. Dadabhai considered it the greatest event in his career. Down to the end of his life he felt proud of that distinction. "Several honours came to me during my lifetime", said he on one occasion, "but no other title created in me that sense of pride which I felt in being known as a Professor." On another occasion, when, as a member of the House of Commons, he was at the zenith of his fame, he wrote : "To me it is the dearest title and honour, it is my delight and many a school-fellow and pupil call me 'Dadabhai Professor' to this day."

Mathematical precision became the keynote of Dadabhai's personal conduct and judgment and, later, of his political career also and of all the agitation he led. Nothing less than a demonstrative proof could make him accept a statement; nothing short of what was just and fair could give him satisfaction. Similarly, all his complaints against the rulers resolved themselves into the indictment that they were not governing India on principles precisely British. All his demands on behalf of India were simply appeals for a precise and just interpretation of, and adherence to,



Knowledge. Its Gujarati and Marathi branches spread the rays of knowledge far and wide among the adult population. Lectures on various subjects for the general awakening and enlightenment of the adult population were delivered before large gatherings. Within a few years almost every topic of popular science was dealt with, accompanied by demonstrations which attracted large audiences. Questions of social organization and reform received special attention. The effect was visible in the general awakening of the people and the gradual transformation in their ideas and way of life.

Dadabhai then embarked on a project for religious reform among the Parsi community. The need for an organization in defence of the purity of their religion was felt by him and his colleagues as keenly as that for liberating the womanhood of India from the thralldom of ignorance.

After their flight from Iran the Parsi settlers in India had lived with Hindus and Muslims for twelve centuries. As a result of such contact many alien beliefs, customs and usages had crept into the Zoroastrian creed. The educated youths emerging from the Elphinstone Institution declined to accept such a medley as representing the gospel of their prophet Zarathushtra. But to convert the conservative elements in the community to their views was a task far more difficult and hazardous than the crusade for educating the girls of the community. Their ancestors had cherished those beliefs and observed those customs for generations. What right had these raw youths to consider themselves wiser than their fathers and grandfathers? Relying, however, on gentle and fervent appeal to the good sense of the community and on persuasion rather than dictation, the reformers proceeded patiently with their mission.

On August 1, 1851, the *Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha* (Guides on the Mazdayasnan Path) was founded. Nowroji Furdoonji, "the tribune of the people", as he was called in recognition of his fearless civic and political activities, was appointed President, and Dadabhai, Secretary. The

avowed object was to expound the true tenets of the Zoroastrian faith, to take off the wrappings, to discover the vital and essential elements and to restore the ancient religion to its pristine purity. The conservative section forming the bulk of the community would not believe it. What guarantee was there, they asked, that, in their zeal to uproot alien practices, the reformers would not lay irreverent hands on the usages and customs of Zoroastrianism itself? Reason once let loose might not rest satisfied with demolishing alien usages and erroneous conclusions deduced from scriptural data, but might eventually attack the data themselves. What could, then, deter the reformers from transforming the old faith according to their western ideas?

Upon the President and the Secretary of the Society devolved the burden of countering such opposition. As Secretary Dadabhai had, besides, to bear the brunt of the work and to combat the constant attacks in hostile newspapers and at meetings of opponents. Whilst, however, the antagonists heaped abuses on the members of the Society, whom they regarded as enemies of their ancestral faith, he refrained from descending to their level. Taking his stand on reason, he challenged them to meet him on that ground. In the end success crowned the efforts of the reformers and the religion of Zarathushtra was weaned from most of the obnoxious accretions.

The *Rahnumae Sabha* achieved its object; it survived the shocks of time, and still carries on its useful work; while its rival, the *Rahe Rastnumae Zarathustrian Sabha*, met with the death it deserved, before it was three years old. Slowly and steadily the alien and accidental elements that had crept into the faith gave place to the ancient and the essential. Fifty years after the flag of reform was unfurled, Dadabhai received, in London, a message from Khurshedji Rustamji Cama, who, after Dadabhai, was the moving spirit of the Society and its President, that it proposed to celebrate its jubilee. In his reply, Dadabhai recalled the initial difficulties :

In the beginning, what vicissitudes did we go through! And, even up to the present day, what continuous struggles against opposition has the Society had to make! The first central idea of the *Rahnumae* at its start was to restore the *Zarthosti* religion to its pristine purity and simplicity. That object, as far as I understand, has been faithfully adhered to under difficulties enough to damp any enthusiast. But I think nobody will deny that not a little of this success, so far as it has been achieved, is owing to you, to your knowledge of the *Avesta* at first hand, and to your untiring exertions to bring out and encourage more workers in the field.

Dadabhai lived to witness also the diamond jubilee of the Society. A deputation consisting of several members of the Society waited on him at his residence at Versova and conveyed its greetings to him as its founder. The Students' Literary and Scientific Society and the *Dnyan Prasarak Mandali* also had their jubilee celebrations, which sent a thrill of joy through Dadabhai's heart. During the last ten years of his life his residence had become a place of pilgrimage for educated and refined women, representative of all communities. They went there annually to greet him on his birthday and to bless him for all that he had done for the uplift of Indian women. To one whose whole life was a chapter of reform, what other thought could have been more cheering in old age than that his zeal for progress during his youth had led to the transformation of a whole nation?

During the following year we find Dadabhai turning to politics. Although he was then a professor in a Government college, he did not feel precluded from taking part in politics. To renew or not to renew the Charter of the East India Company was the burning question of the day. The lease granted to it in 1833 was to expire in 1853 and the Company had applied for the renewal of the Charter for another term of twenty years. After 1833 the Company had ceased to be a trading corporation but had continued as a ruling body. Cumbersome as was its machinery of government, the intellectual progress of the people was neglected, the country's economic progress retarded and its internal development ignored. With the commencement of western education among a small section of the people



it was felt that the right of the Company to govern the country under a system unsuited to its rapidly changing condition should not be allowed to be conceded unchallenged. The greatest grievance of the people in those days was the exclusion of Indians from the service of the State despite the provision made in the Act of 1833 to the effect that "no native of India or natural born subject therein should be disqualified from office by reason only of religion, place of birth, descent or colour".

To ventilate this and other grievances a good opportunity was afforded by the Company's application for an extension of its existence as a political body. The British people took little interest in matters concerning India. The people of India, however, could not afford to look on. The Bengalees were the first to form an association for sending representations to the British Government. Bombay followed suit. On August 26, 1852, a meeting of the citizens of Bombay was held in the rooms of the Elphinstone Institution when the first political association in the Bombay Presidency, named the "Bombay Association", was formed. At that meeting Dadabhai made his maiden speech on political reform. It has to be read to-day in the light of the conditions then prevailing. People had not yet become politically conscious. They had very hazy notions of their political rights and wrongs. The day for self-assertion had not yet dawned. In the circumstances they could only appeal to the sense of fair play and justice of the rulers. In a manifesto prepared for the National Congress fifty-three years later Dadabhai recalled: "How limited our political ideas and aspirations of that time were! The extent and causes of the increasing poverty in India we had hardly any conception of, nor had we fully realized our rights and duties as free British citizens."

Dadabhai's speech is, however, of peculiar interest as it foreshadowed the political creed which sustained him in later life despite dire disappointments.

Under the British Government (said he) we do not suffer any great *zoolum* (oppression). We are comparatively happier

under the kind Government than we are likely to be under any other. Whatever evil we have to complain of originates from one cause, viz., the ignorance of European officers coming fresh from home. With regard to many of the habits, customs, and usages, prevailing in this country, these officers may pass laws or regulations injurious to the nation and yet fancy they have done their duty conscientiously. The authorities think them to be right, while the natives think otherwise. But if an Association like this were in existence, we can suggest improvements. These suggestions coming from such an Assembly must be listened to and perhaps adopted. The real grievances that I am aware of are those relative to the state of the *Kunbis* (peasants) in the interior and the judicial and revenue systems. But we want facts regarding all these, and the present meeting is one step in the inquiry.

The root principles of his political philosophy lie embedded in this speech. India's wrongs should not blind her to the benefits of the British rule. The permanence of that rule was the starting-point and foundation of all hopes. India's destiny had been linked up with it, and she had no desire to change the yoke for any other. The authorities erred, but, it might be, with the best of motives. They might consider to be right what Indians might regard as wrong, and might follow a policy harmful to the interests of India. The remedy lay in agitation. People should combine to give expression to their convictions, and their voice *must* be heard. Herein lay the principal justification and hope for all the agitation Dadabhai carried on—a nation's united voice is bound to be heard.

Before this first manifestation of the political pulsations of the people, the critics of the British rulers were their own countrymen. Now, however, commenced an era of inquiry by Indians themselves into their country's wrongs. The list of grievances increased as the inquiry proceeded but, contrary to the hopes of receiving a sympathetic hearing, cherished by Dadabhai, the authorities turned a deaf ear to all appeals for the redress of wrongs. Nevertheless, the keynote of Dadabhai's policy remained the same. It induced a general belief among Indian politicians that although the authorities on the spot might be indifferent or positively unsympathetic, the liberty-loving people of England would willingly listen to their representations and with

their traditional love for justice and freedom lend a helping hand to their fellow-citizens in India.

During the closing years of the nineteenth century, however, a new generation was rising whose estimate of British rule and British character was based not on the doctrine of faith in British justice but on experience of evasion, if not breach, of promises, and repression of agitation for the redress of India's woes. Salvation, it seemed to them, lay not in supplication but in self-assertion, not in submission but in counteraction, even violence. Even the moderates among the Indian National Congress felt that they had made a fetish of faith in British justice. Nevertheless Dadabhai, who was in England, went to Calcutta in 1906 to reiterate and reaffirm the basic principles of his creed in his Presidential address.

Our faith and our future (said he) are in our own hands. If we are true to ourselves and to our country and make all the necessary sacrifices for our elevation and amelioration, I for one have not the shadow of a doubt that in dealing with such justice-loving, fair-minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. It is this conviction which has supported me against all difficulties. I have never faltered in my faith in the British character and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our gracious Sovereign, proclaimed to us in our great charter of the Proclamation of 1858, will be realized, viz., 'in their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our best reward.'

Faith in the conscience of the British public was, so to say, part of his fibre. His annual messages to the people during his retirement breathed the same sentiments. He refused to believe that the interests of England and India conflicted so violently as to render separation inevitable. Their interests, he believed, were essentially the same. He, therefore, looked forward to the time when the continuance of the British connection could be made to conform to the best interests of India.

To revert to the Bombay Association inaugurated at the first political meeting held in India. It drew up a petition for submission to the British Parliament for an enlightened system of government and admission of Indians

into the Civil Service and the Legislative Councils. The Anglo-Indian press ridiculed the demands. The *Telegraph and Courier* asked indignantly : "Might we not as well attempt to assimilate the natural productions of the two hemispheres as strive to naturalise in the East the growth of Anglo-Saxon civilization? Even were the soil fitted for its reception, would the tree of Liberty flourish after its transplanting? Should it not be raised from the seed and not the graft?"

There was, however, at least one British writer who could look beyond his nose. "It would be a lamentable mistake," he observed in an article in the *Spectator*, "to suppose that a movement like this can be disposed of by being 'put down' or 'put off', nor would it be a less grievous mistake to suppose that to grant the claims of this petition in substance would be a concession to Indians at the expense of the British. On the contrary, it would commence, in a more thorough style than we have yet attempted, the work of identifying the Natives, their affections and progress with English institutions, thus recruiting the alien civil force, by which we hold the country, with a far more numerous militia of attached volunteers."

Words tragically brought home to the British public by the Sepoys' Revolt within five years! The Bombay Association's petition created a stir in England. Several British friends including John Bright and Joseph Hume raised their voice in favour of India's demand, while Richard Cobden could see no advantage either to the people of India or to those of England in the British connection. India, he wrote later, must be ruled by those who lived on that side of the globe. Its people would prefer to be ruled badly according to British notions by their own kith and kin than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed "by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes". The Friends of India held a meeting at St. James's Square, London, which constituted itself into an India Reform Society. Its agitation led to a few concessions, but the result as a whole was scarcely satisfactory to India. It



taught her, however, that concerted agitation would wrest from the authorities more than what seemed possible and dispel apathy and ignorance about India from the British public. "Agitate, agitate and agitate" became Dadabhai's watchword.

While the wave of reform—social, religious and political—was thus sweeping over society, Dadabhai felt the need of a journal to combat the forces of ignorance and fanaticism impeding progress. The press as a whole swims with the crowd; a cash basis governs its policy. There were then in Bombay five Gujarati newspapers, all owned by Parsis, but none was found to have the independence needed for the cause of reform. Dadabhai and his friend Khurshedji Nusserwanji Cama therefore decided to start a fortnightly paper, named the *Rast Gofar*, or Truth Teller; Cama was to provide funds; Dadabhai to run the paper without remuneration. Copies of the journal were to be distributed among the members of the Parsi community free of charge.

Carlyle speaks of a preaching friar settling himself in every village, building a pulpit which he calls a newspaper, and preaching therefrom what most momentous doctrine is in him for man's salvation. Such a preaching friar was Dadabhai. The public of Bombay in those days required to be educated not only in the principles of social and religious reform, but also in the duties of citizenship. So there he stood, the apostle of truth and exponent of the religion of humanity, to preach his gospel from the pulpit of the *Rast Gofar* to the people and to combat the forces of ignorance and conservatism which impeded their progress.

The first number of the new journal saw the light of day on November 15, 1851, when a thousand copies were printed for free distribution. There was not a single advertisement in it; it was a sheer labour of love. November 15 was an unusual day for launching a newspaper. There was, however, a good reason for ushering it in advance of the new year. A serious local disturbance, which had

culminated in a Parsi-Muslim riot, impelled Dadabhai to hasten into the arena of journalism. From the commencement the students who had passed out of the Elphinstone Institute stood by the editor of the *Rast Goftar*, the organ of reform. Dadabhai's connection with it continued even after he left India in 1855 to join the first Indian business firm established in England, Cama & Co., and made England his home. A syndicate was then formed to conduct the paper.

The record of work done by Dadabhai between the years 1851 and 1855 was remarkable for the range of his sympathies and the versatility of his intellect. He was an active member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and read a paper on "Astrology" before the Philosophic Institute of Bombay. When the first Parsi Dramatic Society was formed in Bombay in 1853, he took a lively interest in its work and served on the committee of management. He presided at an important meeting when the Trust Deed of the Fort Charitable Dispensary of Bombay was settled and he was one of the Trustees of the dispensary. Although his means were limited, he gave pecuniary assistance as well as personal service to such philanthropic movements. In 1855 a meeting of Elphinstonians was held to perpetuate the memory of Professor Patton. Dadabhai was invited to preside over the meeting. In the same year he was put on the Grand Jury.

After the horrors of the Napoleonic wars there was a period of peace in Europe for nearly forty years. High hopes were entertained, particularly after the Great Exhibition of 1851, of permanent peace. Within three years, however, there was a conflagration. The Czar of Russia claimed recognition of his rights as Protector of the Christian subjects of the Turkish Sultan. This claim was repudiated by the "Sick Man of Europe" who, despite all his infirmities, declared war upon Russia, fully relying on the support of England and France. The astute Ottoman was not wrong. England and France soon found themselves drawn into the fray.

The theory then current was that Russia on the Danube meant Russia on the Indus. No wonder, when the Patriotic Fund was raised in connection with the war, there was great enthusiasm among the people of India to mark not only their sense of loyalty to the British Crown but also their gratitude for the endeavours of the rulers to keep the Russian wolf as far away as possible from their frontiers. A public meeting was held in Bombay on January 31, 1855, in furtherance of the objects of the Patriotic Fund. Lord Elphinstone presided ; Dadabhai was one of the speakers. He saw in the conflict a struggle of liberty against tyranny and prayed for the success of Great Britain and her allies because, he believed, they were on the side of justice and freedom.

"A very pertinent question has been asked," said he, "why the natives of Bombay should join in contributing to the Patriotic Fund, and the question has been very ably answered by Dr. Wilson, who has pointed out to us that the interests of India are bound up with those of England."

## CHAPTER III

### FROM MATHEMATICS TO MERCHANDISE

“DADABHAI, what a fall!” exclaimed Principal Harkness when he heard that the Professor had decided to give up his professorship to set up in sordid business.

In the year 1855, the commercial firm of the Camas decided to open a business firm in London with a branch in Liverpool. It was the first Indian commercial house to be established in England. They invited Dadabhai to join them as a partner in that pioneering enterprise. Having been his colleagues and supporters in his social, political and patriotic work and having witnessed with admiration his selfless labour and powers of organization, they felt that although he had no experience of business, they could not have had a more capable and conscientious partner.

The Professor readily accepted the offer to go from the college to the counting house although he was not quite sure of success as a business man. As a teacher as well as a politician he had made “India for Indians” his slogan and had felt the need for establishing intimate contacts with England, particularly to provide a home for Indian students to go there and compete for the Indian Civil Service and other examinations. The offer made by the Camas held out prospects of contributing something towards the fruition of India’s demand for the Indianisation of the services. Thus the shift from mathematics to merchandise opened out a vast vista of patriotic service to the country, and what appeared a fall turned out to be a stepping-stone to his elevation to the unique position he attained later as a peerless patriot and the Father of Indian Nationalism.



What was a gain to Cama & Co. was a loss to the Elphinstone Institution. In a farewell address its students expressed their sense of the loss sustained by the College. Among them was Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, renowned later for his scholarship, and Bal Mangesh Wagle who became one of Dadabhai's devoted colleagues when he was Dewan of Baroda. The Students' Literary and Scientific Society also placed on record its deep sense of the valued services rendered by Dadabhai as a member of the Society. A deputation consisting of the Society's representatives waited upon him and presented to him its resolution eulogizing his services "in connexion with female education and the diffusion of knowledge among the Parsi community by means of popular lectures on Natural Philosophy and the publication of cheap periodical literature".

With the best wishes of all Dadabhai embarked on his voyage to England on June 27, 1855, in the P. & O. Navigation Co.'s boat *Madras*. At Aden the passengers were transferred on July 9 to another steamer *Oriental* bound for Suez. Thence, proceeding overland, they joined the *Sultan* at Alexandria and reached Southampton on August 22. With him went his two colleagues Muncherji Hormusji Cama and Khurshedji Rustomji Cama to found the new firm. The three together were to form a triumvirate. No action was to be taken unless they were unanimous in their decision. In case of divergence of opinion, reference was to be made to the Head Office in Bombay.

Dadabhai's idealism in business led to differences of opinion in the triumvirate. He felt it was his sacred duty to lay in England foundations for the success not only of Cama & Co. but of the business enterprise of Indians generally. On the integrity and credit of his firm and the confidence in the London market in the commercial community of India depended the prospects of development of India's trade with foreign countries. Khurshedji Cama shared his idealism but Muncherji Cama, a "normal" business

man, complained to the Head Office that it had given him as a colleague a philosopher who did not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of the firm in pursuance of what appeared to be a policy based on quixotic principles of commercial morality.

On one occasion Dadabhai suspected that the manufacturers with whom his firm had placed an order for reel-thread on behalf of a Bombay firm, had not supplied reels of the specific length. He, therefore, took the bundles of thread to his bedroom and sat up till midnight, measuring the thread. Some reels measured eighty yards instead of a hundred, which was the stipulated length.

"We shall have to reject these reels", said Dadabhai to his colleagues.

"Why?" asked Muncherji Cama.

"Because of the shortage."

"That is not our concern", urged Muncherji. "Such discrepancies are not unusual; if our Bombay friends feel aggrieved, they may prefer a claim for damages."

Dadabhai was, however, obdurate. "What you say may be true," said he, "but having discovered the shortage, how can I be a party to the transaction?"

Khurshedji Cama agreed with Dadabhai. The matter was referred to the Head Office. Sharp came instructions not to make any more fuss about the shortage. Dadabhai was prepared for this rebuff. Often had he been overruled in this fashion. Continuance of the business alliance after the expiry of his agreement with the firm, therefore, seemed undesirable and impracticable.

Among the commodities handled by the firm were opium, wine and spirits. To pocket the earnings of trading in articles which led to the ruin of myriads of human beings was altogether revolting to Dadabhai's sense of self-respect and duty to promote the welfare and progress of humanity. He wrote to the Head Office that he would not accept his share in the profits accruing from transactions concerning those articles. "Will you tell me", asked the head of the firm, Khurshedji N. Cama, "from what

sources Government get funds for the payment of salaries to professors of colleges and other officers? Did you not receive your salary as a professor from revenue derived from the traffic in opium and liquor? If you retire from business and revert to Government service, will you not once more live on the tainted revenue obtained from the same business that stinks in your nostrils? If our firm ceases dealing in opium, will it put a stop to the traffic in that commodity? Will not others deal in what you taboo?"

The philosopher-trader adhered to his decision but, as the result of all such differences of opinion, he severed his connection with the House of Cama. During his association with it he had inspired some of the scions of the Cama family with his ideals of personal conduct and commercial morality. One of them, M. N. Cama, asked Khurshedji Rustomji Cama in a letter, dated April 4, 1859: "Do you advise me to join Papa in China business? I do not really like opium trade because I have seen with my own eyes the result of such trading and the effect on the consumers."

Dadabhai returned to India with his mind enriched by his stay in England. It was an era when Gladstone, Cobden and Bright were breathing a new spirit of liberalism into British politics, and philosophers and authors such as Herbert Spencer, Mill and Carlyle were vitalizing society with new theories and ideals of social reconstruction. It made Dadabhai realize more vividly than ever before the contrast between the social, intellectual, economic and political condition of the people in England and that of his own countrymen.

While becoming more and more conscious of the backward condition of India and her social, economic and political wrongs, Dadabhai was impressed more and more by the sense of justice and fair play of the British public generally. He felt certain that if the British people, to whom India was a sealed book, could be apprised of the defects and injustice of British Rule in India, they would

raise their voice against such injustice. To awaken England to India's wrongs, India's battles should, he thought, be fought not merely on the floor of the House of Commons by a handful of British sympathisers but throughout Great Britain.

In 1859, Dadabhai established his own business firm in England under the name of Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. It was a flourishing business, demonstrating that prosperous trading was in no way incompatible with principles of ethics. A thriving business man need not sell his conscience. As a fairly prosperous business man Dadabhai came to be respected also as a philanthropic citizen. He was a Director of the Queen Insurance Company and a guarantor of the Industrial Exhibition of 1862. In aid of several projects of public usefulness he made generous contributions. These included movements to raise funds in Bombay for perpetuating the memory of Mountstuart Elphinstone and Jugannath Shankarseth, for an address and purse presented to Principal Harkness on his retirement, and for the provision of a library of Sanskrit books for the Elphinstone Institution. Handsome also were his contributions to the Fund raised in Europe in 1861 for the Parsi community in London and to another Fund raised in Bombay for giving English education to Parsi girls. He was an active member of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophic Society, the Philomathic Society, the Council of the Liverpool Athenaeum, the Royal Institute of London, the Royal Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Ethnological Society, the Anthropological Society, the Society of Arts and of the National Indian Association. Highly respected as a Mason, he was one of the founders and the treasurer of the Lodge, "The Marquis of Dalhousie".

As a member of the Manchester Cotton Supply Association, Dadabhai studied the organization of the cotton trade and read before the meetings of the Association papers on the subject of the supply of Indian cotton to England. At the same time he impressed on the



Bombay merchants and millowners that they could not successfully compete with Lancashire unless they carefully studied the business methods of the British traders and manufacturers to secure India's raw material at the lowest rate and sell manufactured articles at the highest prices.

One of the most trusted business men with whom Dadabhai's firm did business in cotton was Samuel Smith. Business relations ripened into life-long friendship. Being for many years a member of the House of Commons, he was in a position to render valuable assistance to Dadabhai in all his political activities. Both were keenly interested in the temperance movement. Smith went to India in the year 1906 to preside over the All-India Temperance Conference and attended the historic session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta when, for the first time from the Congress platform, Dadabhai as President demanded self-government. On the fourth day of the Congress (December 29) the delegates heard with grief that this true friend of India had suddenly passed away and they placed on record their deep sense of the loss sustained by India in his death.

As India's unofficial ambassador in England Dadabhai seldom missed the opportunity to voice the grievances of the people. His campaign against the disabilities under which Indian candidates for the Indian Civil Service examination were labouring had commenced in 1859. But open competition for the Service had not long been established when a reduction in the age limit from 23 to 22 was abruptly announced. This change disqualified the first Indian candidate, R.H. Wadia, from appearing at the examination. Dadabhai sent a protest to the Secretary of State for India. The change, he urged, should have been notified beforehand and he demanded that in justice to all candidates otherwise eligible they should be allowed to appear at the examination. Through Sir Erskine Perry, John Bright was induced to take an interest in Wadia's case and he and other friends decided to raise a debate in the House of Commons.

Before, however, they could do so, the American Civil War broke out and the question of Indian Civil Service regulations had to be shelved. Dadabhai thereupon continued his agitation until an assurance was obtained from the Secretary of State for India that no further changes in the Regulations would be made without due publicity. To Dadabhai it was a question affecting the very basis of national advancement. Increasing association of Indians in the administration of their country was the very basis of progress. Denial to the people of India of their share in the governance of the country was the fountain-head of all the discontent. That broad aspect of the problem, therefore, compelled him to continue the agitation until he got the House of Commons to pass, in the year 1893, a resolution in favour of simultaneous examinations in England and India for the Indian Civil Service. Even then the Government of India took no action to implement the resolution of the House, which technically was not binding on it. The agitation was continued. "Defeat" and "Despondency" were words not to be found in Dadabhai's dictionary. Year in and year out he returned to the charge and lived to see a great improvement in the opportunities available to Indian youths to occupy responsible positions in various branches of public service.

To all the students who went to England for studies, Dadabhai was an unfailing guide. When the door of the Indian Medical Service was practically closed to Indian students, he took up the cudgels on behalf of an aggrieved student. A memorial to the Secretary of State was of no avail. Under Dadabhai's directions another memorial was submitted to the War Office, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, signed by several students resident in England, and the ban was removed.

During all these years, Dadabhai had under his guidance a group of students of all communities who profited by the example of his simple life, high ideals and patriotic endeavour. The most notable example was that of Gandhiji. On September 1, 1888, he sailed from

Bombay with a letter of introduction to Dadabhai. "You need no introduction to him", said the writer of the letter. "The fact of your being an Indian is sufficient introduction. But you are a youngster, untravelled and timid. This letter will give courage enough to go to the G.O.M. and all will be smooth sailing for you." "And", says Gandhiji,\* "so it was . . . . . Indeed, he was in the place of father to everyone of the Indian students, no matter to which province or religion they belonged. He was there to advise and guide them in their difficulties. I have always been a hero-worshipper. And so Dadabhai became real *Dada* to me. The relationship took the deepest root in South Africa, for he was my constant adviser and inspiration. Hardly a week passed without a letter from me to him describing the conditions of Indians in South Africa."

## CHAPTER IV

### A PEEP INTO DADABHAI'S HOME

**I**T is time we have a peep into Dadabhai's home. A pathetic feature of society in India in those days, common to Hindus, Muslims and Parsis, was lack of intelligent fellowship and co-operation between husband and wife. With the spread of education among them, during the middle of the nineteenth century, the educated classes began to feel that want more keenly. In no individual case, however, the situation could have been so pathetic as in that of Dadabhai who was, as mentioned before, married before he was in his teens. Dadabhai resigned himself to his lot. The infelicity of the union elicited the noblest that was in him. Howsoever ill-matched, he was not found wanting in tenderness. Although she showed no aptitude for study, he strove to teach her as best he could, took her out whenever possible and played the husband and the teacher in turn to widen her outlook on life and make her happy. But although Dadabhai was reconciled to his lot, his mother was not. As her son distinguished himself in life she realized she had made a grievous mistake in selecting his wife. Such a talented youth required the cheering company and intelligent co-operation and inspiration of an accomplished partner in life. Could she not yet repair the mischief done?

Bigamy was repugnant to the teaching of Zoroastrianism. Nevertheless, it was not then uncommon for a Parsi to take a second wife in exceptional cases. On the eve of the passing of the Parsi Matrimonial Laws which made bigamy penal, many a Parsi took unto himself a second wife during the lifetime of the first. Dadabhai's mother implored him to do likewise, but for him it was a revolting proposal. He considered she was in this respect unreasonable and unjust. She, on the other hand, thought



he was dense and hyper-sensitive. To prevent him from sacrificing his life in this manner she appealed to her brother to prevail upon Dadabhai to be practical. The uncle tried to induce his nephew to pay heed to his mother's advice, but in vain. Dadabhai then appealed to his mother in the name of humanity. "Put me," he said, "in place of my wife. Suppose I, your son, am suffering from the disabilities from which she suffers. Would you, in that case, ask my wife to marry a second husband?" After this his mother dropped the subject.

That was the position when Dadabhai left for England for the second time. In front of his house lived an English medical practitioner, Dr. Archer, with three intelligent daughters. Dadabhai used to pay friendly visits to the family. Dame Rumour had it that Dadabhai had embraced Christianity and intended marrying an Englishwoman. When the report reached the ears of his mother, she sent him piteous letters, imploring him to desist from taking such a step. Dadabhai booked his passage to Bombay forthwith.

It was twelve o'clock midnight (September 9, 1863) when a visitor knocked at the door of Dadabhai's family house in Bombay. Maneckbai and Bulbai were fast asleep, but a friend and major-domo of the family rushed to the door.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"It is Dadabhai", was the reply.

"What?" thundered the man inside. "You villain, how dare you take Dadabhai's name who is in England? Get away, otherwise I will break your bones!"

"Maku", said the visitor, gently calling the man by his name, "please open the door."

These words had a magic effect on Maku. Recognizing the familiar voice, he joyfully threw the door open and held Dadabhai in his arms.

Then met the mother and son; and the husband and wife; their eyes wet with tears. Within a few minutes Dadabhai cleared all misunderstanding.

During this visit of Dadabhai, a few Parsis inaugurated a novel society. Its members took a vow "not to dine without having at the same table female members of the family". This "revolutionary" social organization marked the beginning of the emancipation not only of Parsi but also of Hindu women from the tyranny of a social usage which lowered their status and enjoined restraints on their liberty little different from those associated with the *purdah* system. Among the promoters of the organization the two most conspicuous figures were Manockji Cursetji and Dadabhai Naoroji. They held each other in great esteem; both stood head and shoulders above their peers in intellect and zeal for social reform. Whilst the orthodox section of the community was deriding the innovation, Dadabhai sought to justify it by giving an account of the condition of women in different countries and of their elevating influence wherever they had attained their real status in society as their husbands' partners in life.

The cultured members of Manockji Cursetji's family were the moving spirits of all projects for social reform. Their relations with Dadabhai were therefore most cordial. To Miss Serene Cursetji, Dadabhai was an affectionate friend and counsellor. She always addressed him as "Dadabhai Master" and she had no truer and more disinterested friend. In her diary for April 14, 1865, the day on which she left India for Europe with her father and other members of the family, she wrote: "It is seldom that one meets with such a friend, as this world is a vile one; consequently I am proud of him—and thankful to God that he had given me a good, pious and virtuous friend."

Dadabhai left Bombay for England on April 29. On this occasion he took with him, for the first time, his mother and wife, and his son Ardeshir and daughter Shirin. Where they put up, there is no family record to show, but we learn from Miss Cursetji's fascinating diary that he rented a house in Hornsey, with a splendid garden, and named it "Parsee Lodge." Among young Cursetji's

remiscences of the period there is one concerning Dadabhai's affection for his children that deserves mention :

"It was a sight at once charming and delightful to see him, when off work, unbend himself, squatted on the drawing-room carpet, playing with his little boy and girl. His conversation was always interesting, informative, and instructive, decked out with anecdotes and stories, and flashes of friendly fun and ready wit. His voice had a singular charm."

In April 1864, before he sailed for Europe, Dadabhai had offered to the Bombay University, of which he had been nominated a Fellow, a sum of Rs. 1,75,000 for the endowment of a Fellowship to perpetuate the memory of Lord Canning. The amount was contributed by several donors, Dadabhai himself having subscribed Rs. 50,000. The proposal, however, fell through as, before the amount was paid, the commercial crisis which supervened on the termination of the American Civil War spelt the ruin of many a business concern and individual in England and India.

For Dadabhai's firm the outbreak of the American Civil War was a godsend, and he amassed a fortune. During the period of hostilities there was a boom in the cotton trade in the Bombay markets. It was, however, followed by frenzied speculation so that on the cessation of hostilities there was a slump which brought about the ruin of numerous merchant princes and commercial houses. Several firms which collapsed in the crisis owed Dadabhai large sums of money which could not be recovered. But the main cause of his undoing was his own good nature, his sheer self-sacrifice in extricating friends from financial embarrassment even though they were on the verge of insolvency. Their creditors demanded immediate payment from Dadabhai as he had stood surety for them. He quickly met all his obligations and as the result saw his own firm go under. He placed all his account books before creditors. Deeply impressed by his integrity even in the

midst of such a crisis they released him from further liabilities and engaged his own services in connection with the liquidation proceedings and even offered him loans to set him up in business again.

Referring to the crisis the writer of Dadabhai's obituary in *Investor's Review* (July 17, 1917) wrote : "When his character and attitude happened to come up to the Bank of England Discount Office, its Chief, while as a Conservative pooh-poohing and sneering at Mr. Naoroji's utterances, told us that he knew him to be a man of strict integrity in business and as proof added, 'he met all his engagements in 1866, a thing comparatively few in the East were able to do'."



## CHAPTER V

### STIRRING THE BRITISH PUBLIC

**P**URSUIT of commerce was only a means to an end. Work in England for the economic and political well-being of the people was the main object in view in giving up his professorship and joining the business firm of Camas. After that passing phase in his eventful career, Dadabhai bent his energy on that self-imposed patriotic mission, resorting to means more congenial, more direct and promising than sordid business.

Since the days of Wellesley it had been India's great grievance that neither the British public nor Parliament evinced any interest in Indian affairs. During the years spent by him in England Dadabhai realized it more vividly than his countrymen had done before him. Seeing that the British public were not kept well-informed of the true state of affairs in India, he felt that if the ignorance of the British people concerning the condition of India were dispelled, their insular prejudices removed and the cobwebs of misunderstandings cleared, the ties between the two countries could be strengthened to the lasting benefit of both. After all, who were the real rulers of India? Not the British Sovereign, nor the British Government, but the British public whose will, subject to constitutional limitations, was law. After his study of British institutions and the character of the British people, Dadabhai believed that if the British people remained true to themselves, true to their inborn sense and traditions of freedom, justice and fair play, they would help India to attain self-government. "We Indian people believe", he used to tell British audiences, "that although John Bull is a little thick-headed, once we can penetrate through his head into his brain that a certain thing is right and proper to be done, you may be quite sure that it will be done."

To stir the sense of the British people to their responsibilities concerning the governance of India became thereafter Dadabhai's life-long mission. To rivet their attention, single-handed, on the diverse problems concerning the welfare of the Indian people was obviously impossible. It was necessary to have a group of workers for the purpose, particularly to secure the help and co-operation of British allies without which he could not hope to create a healthy public opinion in England concerning India or to impress adequately on the members of Parliament the urgent need for reforms.

Dadabhai, therefore, started, in collaboration with W. C. Bonnerjee, the London Indian Society, with the object of bringing Englishmen and Indians together at social gatherings and exchanging views on subjects connected with India. There were two interesting self-denying ordinances. The Society could not discuss "any purely religious subject," nor could it at any time pledge itself to any party, political or social, in India or in England. Thus protected from pitfalls, the London Indian Society carried on useful propaganda for more than fifty years, with Dadabhai as its President until his retirement from England in the year 1907.

In February 1866, John Crawford, President of the Ethnological Society of London, read a paper in which he attempted to establish the intellectual and moral superiority of European races over Asiatics. That ethnological illusion was based on a superficial study of different races by the early anthropologists according to the divergences of their cephalic index, colour, facial angles and other peculiarities. Not merely the president of that learned society but almost the whole of Europe then made a fetish of that fallacious theory of racial superiority. Dadabhai, who was a member of the Anthropological Society as well as the Ethnological Society, would not allow such an unscientific assumption of the inferiority of the Asiatic races to go unchallenged.

There were several other sociological fallacies in Crawford's paper. Dadabhai was not out to demolish all of them. He was anxious merely to vindicate Indian intellect and character. Within a month he came out with a crushing rejoinder to Crawford's paper, pointing out all the specious arguments underlying Crawford's thesis. It was a joint and spirited appeal to science and history grounded on the author's exquisite knowledge of the history and literature of Europe and Asia, ancient as well as modern.

As an illustration of the mental inferiority of the Asiatics, Crawford had stated that in the seminaries at eighteen the Indian youth was left far behind by the European. Dadabhai pointed out that the principal object of Indian students who joined English seminaries during the early days of the East India Company was to acquire a knowledge of English. The fact that they discontinued their studies on attaining that object was no justification for the assumption that Indian students were incapable of progress after the age of eighteen. On the contrary there had subsequently been such a rapid advance in university education that the *Friend of India* had observed that university examinations had been "assuming a Chinese magnitude" and presenting a spectacle at once curious and gratifying.

Another disparaging comment of Crawford was the dearth of great names in Asiatic literature. Dadabhai cited several famous works in ancient Indian and Persian literature. With pride he recalled the tribute paid by European savants to the unsurpassed achievements of the Brahmins in grammatical analysis and Sanskrit works abounding in every branch of science. Quoting Horace Wilson, he pointed out that in fiction much of the invention displayed on the revival of letters in Europe had an Indian origin, while in spiritual and philosophical speculations Hindus had traversed the very same ground trodden by the philosophers of Greece and Rome. In astronomy and metaphysics, too, they had kept pace with the most

enlightened nations of the world, while in medicine and surgery they had attained as much proficiency as was practicable before the study of anatomy was rendered possible by the discoveries of later research.\*

In vindication of Indian character Dadabhai referred to the testimony of authors, travellers and administrators to refute the sweeping assertions made by Crawford on insufficient information and imperfect data. He recalled similar aspersions on English character by a Parsi who was disgusted with the attempts to give a bad name to Indians. Speaking of the English people, the enraged Parsi had said: "Look at all the mass of untruths in the daily advertisements and puffs...how much swindling is there in the concoction of companies for the benefit of the promoters only...Look at the number of immoral haunts in London, read the account of *Life in Liverpool*, see the social evil and street immorality, cases of unfaithfulness in domestic life".

Having studied superficially the character of the English people, that critic had formed the opinion that they were the most hypocritical, the most selfish and unprincipled people.

"If", said Dadabhai, "such evidence as Mr. Crawford relies upon be conclusive as to the character of the natives of India, I do not see how the Parsi gentleman's conclusion cannot also be admitted as proved." Indeed, the principal argument that he and his colleagues had to encounter in their efforts to promote female education in India was that it had corrupted English society!

"When we left India in 1855 to come over here to open the first Parsi firm", added Dadabhai, "the principal advice given by our European friends was that we should be exceedingly careful in our business in the city against the many rogues we should meet with there. 'In India', said one, 'we keep one eye open; in England you must keep both eyes wide open'."

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\*Dadabhai Naoroji: *The Grand Old Man of India* (Allen & Unwin) p. 99.



Was evidence of that sort to be allowed to traduce whole nations? Differences in the conditions of different people and their various peculiarities required careful study, and due allowance had to be made before attributing any result to innate differences. Repeated misrepresentations of this kind brought home to Dadabhai the need for an organization more broadbased than the London Indian Society. The outcome was the East India Association, inaugurated on December 1, 1866, in collaboration with a committee of retired English officers with whom the idea of acquainting the British public and the British Government with matters pertaining to the East Indies appears to have originated. Its membership was thrown open to all who were interested in the welfare of India. A large number of eminent English politicians, statesmen, ex-Governors, and ex-officials resident in England readily joined the Association. The first President was Lord Lyveden, son of Robert Smith, Advocate-General of Bengal, whose fame among the people of India was, to quote the words of James Mackintosh, the philosopher-lawyer of Bombay, "greater than that of any Pandit since the days of Manu". Lord Lyveden was born in Calcutta. This circumstance, coupled with his connexion with the Board of Control\*, first as its Secretary and then as its President, had given him an interest in the welfare of India almost as keen as his interest in England. Dadabhai was at first only a member of the Committee, but the duties of Secretary of the Association soon devolved on him.

The platform of the Association provided a forum for all who had any special information to give or views to express on Indian and Colonial subjects. Dadabhai was one of the most outstanding figures at these gatherings. At the very first meeting held on May 2, 1867, he read a paper on "England's Duties to India". He raised three main issues. Was British rule in India a benefit to India

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\* It consisted of the Commissioners for the affairs of India appointed under the East India Company Act, 1784.

*and England?* If so, what were the best means to make it endure for the longest possible time? Were such means adopted? Acknowledging the benefits of law and order under the British regime, he gave figures showing enormous contributions made by India towards England's wealth and strength. Then he referred to the annual drain of the wealth of the country to England and the total exclusion of Indians from the administration of their own country. Nevertheless, India wanted her connexion with England to endure. Why? The explanation was to be found in a parable taken from a vernacular journal. A fox entangled among some creepers was pounced upon by a swarm of flies. Seeing them sucking his blood, a crow asked the fox whether he might drive away the flies. "No", replied Renard, "these flies are now satisfied, and if you drive them away, another hungry swarm would take their place."

What about the means to ensure solidarity between the two countries? Some people maintained that India was conquered by the sword and must be retained by the sword; some advised a policy of benevolent despotism; others, however, stressed the wisdom of a policy of justice, of "equality among all Her Majesty's subjects and honesty with the princes of India". Reviewing the three policies, Dadabhai observed that the third, "the policy proclaimed to the people and the Princes of India in the name of the Sovereign, was the hope of India and the anchor of England".

It is gratifying and hopeful to find that the statesmen who rule and the thinkers who guide the policy of this country have distinctly seen and clearly enunciated that India should be ruled for India's sake; that the true and only tower of strength to the English rule is not a hundred thousand English soldiers, but the willing consent and grateful loyalty of the people themselves; and that when the time comes for a separation, and which I trust is far distant, the world may rejoice in a glorious chapter added to its history, of the regeneration of an old, but unfortunate, race, and India may forever remember gratefully the benefactors who restored her to more than her ancient splendour and civilization.

If this was the right policy what were the right means

of implementing it? Now followed a formidable list of grievances. Neglect of education, denial to qualified Indians of a share in the administration, repeated famines, lack of irrigation and means of communication, these and other woes of India were brought vividly to the notice of the audience, with an exhortation to the British people to be "true to their nature and genius" and to apply themselves honestly to the discharge of their duties.

In another paper read by Dadabhai on July 5, on "Mysore", he gave documentary evidence to show that the British Government were bound to acknowledge a separate Government in Mysore and the continuance of a "native rule" in that territory. On November 25, Dadabhai came forward with yet another paper on the "Expenses of the Abyssinian War", demanding that India should not be saddled with any portion of the cost of wars fought in the interests of the British Empire. It was argued by official apologists that India had lost nothing because she would have had to pay the troops even if they had not been transferred. Dadabhai's examination of this argument was devastating.

What is it that the troops are kept in India for? Whatever that was, India lost by the transfer of the troops. If it was nothing, then the army should have been reduced. If it was something, then how could it be said that India lost nothing? If the troops were required for security, then it was unfair that India should have been deprived of that security and yet have been made to pay for it.

Dadabhai's enthusiasm proved infectious. Member after member came forward to read papers on important subjects. On June 11, General Sir Arthur Cotton read a paper on "Irrigation and Water Transit in India". The unprecedented succession of drought and famine was then filling India with distress and discontent. The authorities seemed to favour the construction of railways more than canals as a remedial measure. Sir Arthur had some caustic remarks to make with regard to the published papers on the subject, all filled with writing, but with not one word about doing anything. If India could be irrigated with ink, the famines would have been stopped long

ago; but he should have preferred a Governor-General, or head of the Public Works Department, "who would irrigate one acre, or cut one mile of navigation, to one who would write a whole Blue book full of frothy declamation about the necessity of irrigation, and the terrible difficulties attending it".

On August 13, 1867 Dadabhai raised the question of admission of Indians to the Civil Service and proposed that a memorial be sent to the Secretary of State for India, demanding that competitive examinations should be held in India as well as in England. Through the kindness of Sir Erskine Perry he had come to know of a minute of a committee of the Council of the Secretary of State for India which had recommended, in the year 1860, that examinations should be held simultaneously in both countries for all the Civil Services. He was asking nothing more. Sir Herbert Edwards suggested that the Association should also call attention to the desirability of establishing scholarships so as to enable students to go to England to complete their education. After having heard the members of the deputation, Sir Stafford Northcote expressed himself favourably disposed to both the suggestions.

The next step was to interest members of the House of Commons in this subject. Dadabhai approached several M.P.s and succeeded in getting Henry Fawcett to give notice of motion to the effect that the House of Commons deemed it desirable that the examination should be held simultaneously in London, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. He then read another paper on April 17, 1868, and moved that the Association should support Fawcett's motion.

Hostile critics often questioned the fitness of Indians for offices of trust. They were under the illusion that Indians were deficient in ability, integrity, physical power and energy. Dadabhai did not wish to go over the ground he had already covered in his paper on European and Asiatic races, but, he said, he asked those who spoke scornfully of Indians not to forget how some Englishmen in India, in former days, were suddenly transformed into



rich Nawabs; how after selling their power and influence in India the Company bought their power in the English legislature by bribery; how the Company's servants cheated their own masters; and how their conduct furnished some of the most remarkable instances upon record of the power of interest to extinguish all sense of justice and even of shame. It was natural for educated Englishmen drawing high pay or profits to feel indignant at the bribery and corruption of the poor people with low education, low pay or profits, and low prospects, but Dadabhai asked them to look round and observe the amount of fraud and "doing" in London and to remember that several Englishmen drawn from the lower classes were not behaving creditably in India.

The real question was, when Indians were as highly educated as Englishmen, did they attain to the same character for integrity or not? Holding in his hand a pamphlet of ninety-five pages, entitled "Evidence relating to the efficiency of Native Agency in India", Dadabhai said he had collected a large volume of testimony "as to the efficiency and integrity of the educated natives employed in the various departments of the Indian Service in offices of trust and responsibility".

It was an interesting symposium of opinions given by eminent authorities. Retired Governors, civilians and military officers, having experience of various provinces, all testified to the intelligence of Indians; a few of them, however, thought that integrity was not yet a strong point in Indian character. Dadabhai did not keep back from his audience a single adverse opinion; he left it to them to draw their own conclusions. Some of these opinions served to clarify the situation. For instance, Sir Bartle Frere observed :

In India, as in Europe, we find a great difference in capacity between different races; between different classes in the same race; between the same race in different stages of civilization; between the children of an intellectual and a non-intellectual family; between the rich and the poor; between members of different religious schools; and, in fact, we find

that every variety of circumstance in the origin and training of a man makes some difference in what I may call his original intellectual capacity. And after making allowance for this difficulty in instituting any comparison between the two groups of nations, I should say that there was no perceptible difference between the children of the two groups, save that the children of the warmer climate were more precocious in the early development of their intellects, and paid for their advantage in lacking somewhat of the stamina and strength of the more slowly ripening children of the colder climate.

Of this I feel pretty confident, that, if a million children could be taken at random, so as to represent every variety of nation, rank, and religion in Europe, and another million taken in like manner in India, there would certainly be no inferiority observable in the intellectual capacity of the Indian million. I believe that many of the prevalent differences of opinion as to the actual result, as shown by experience, arise from our forgetting in almost every comparison we make, many of the main elements which ought to enter into our calculation and comparison.

Nobody supposed, said Chisholm Anstey, that the natives of India were deficient in ability. He believed in their integrity, in their capacity, and in their fitness for government. Nevertheless, he was against the clamour to "thrust a certain proportion of natives every year as eligible for high office" upon the Secretary of State, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. He would not employ an Indian any more than an Englishman in a particular district or province in which his household gods were set and his worldly fortunes were cast. Why? Because he was an Indian? No, because he would not appoint anyone to an office in a locality in which he had for some time resided.

Dadabhai was ready with a rejoinder. To say that there should be no Indian in the Civil Service of India was like saying that there should be no Englishman in the Civil Service of England. The localities of appointment were mere matters of detail. The main question was to put Indians and Englishmen on a footing of equality as regards entrance into the service. Dadabhai's motion was carried, the learned counsel being the only dissentient.

Within two years of its existence the Association had demonstrated what a wide field of useful work lay before

it. It set Dadabhai thinking how the efforts of its members could be reinforced if it had branches in India at the capital cities, and if it were helped financially by the Princes and the people of India. This idea commended itself to his colleagues. It was decided that he should proceed to India and establish branches of the Association in selected places and collect funds.

A deputation of the Association, including Dadabhai, had presented to the Secretary of State a memorial soliciting immediate attention to the necessity of irrigation works in India. It needed, however, not one or two, but a volley of memorials before the authorities could be roused to set the official machinery in motion. On the eve of Dadabhai's departure to India, it was proposed that another representation should be made to the Secretary of State. In a minute which Dadabhai left behind and which was placed before the Association's meeting, held on December 8, 1868, he gave a historical survey of the devastating famines with which the population was periodically afflicted. Why was the work of irrigation culpably neglected? Was it a question of cost? If so, he urged, the question should not be considered mainly as one of profit and loss. Even if it were certain that the expenditure would yield no return, the State would, in his opinion, "be bound by the highest sense of duty to undertake them".

In 1870, it was decided by Government to spend an additional amount of £100,000,000 on railways. Sir Arthur Cotton challenged the wisdom of that decision, and the East India Association devoted no less than three evenings to an examination of the issues raised by the "Grand Old Man of Irrigation", as he was called.

Soon afterwards the Duke of Argyll moved the second reading of the Governor-General of India Bill in the House of Lords. The Bill contained a clause empowering the Governor-General to nominate qualified Indians to the Civil Service under a system of selection instead of by examinations. It was, in a way, a triumph of Dadabhai's prolonged agitation. He was, no doubt, an advocate of

free competition and had suggested that a competitive examination for some of the appointments to the service should be held in India and that the selected candidates should be required to go to England and pass further examinations. The Secretary of State had, however, endeavoured to meet the wishes of the Association by a system of nominations under which nine out of sixty appointments would have gone to Indians, whilst the doorway would have remained open for an Indian candidate to enter the service by open competition at the examination held in England.

As a compromise Dadabhai was prepared to welcome the concession, trifling though it was. It produced, however, a strange ferment in India. The Bombay Branch of the East India Association condemned the system of nomination as humiliating to the country. Moreover, where was the guarantee that the enactment of 1869 would not remain a dead letter as did the Act of 1863 and the Royal Proclamation? Even if its provisions were implemented, where was the guarantee that selection would be based on merit?

Dadabhai, therefore, sent from India a paper on the subject, which was read at a meeting held on July 7, 1869. "I do not suppose", he observed, "that anybody would be disposed to blame Indians for this suspiciousness, especially when their fears are based on past experience." Yet justifiable though the reasons were for doubts, Dadabhai considered that they might have reliance upon the distinct pledge given by the Secretary of State. Until the system of nomination was abolished in 1886, there was a constant uproar about the appointments made by Government. To purge recruitment of the abuses inherent in the system and to ensure the selection of the most deserving candidates by competitive examinations in England and India, a decisive battle had to be fought, and was fought, as we shall see, on the floor of the House of Commons, one of the combatants being Dadabhai himself.

Dadabhai arrived in Bombay on May 5, 1869, and



gave his first lecture explaining the objects and work of the Association. Like the lion, a very appropriate symbol of English character, the English public could not be roused easily, but, said Dadabhai, when once roused, no obstacle could stop it. All that was necessary was to make out a good case. "A kind of Providence", wrote Edmund Burke, "has placed in our breasts a hatred of the unjust and cruel in order that we may preserve ourselves from cruelty and injustice." Probably Dadabhai had these words in mind when he told his audience: "The Englishman is incapable of despotism. He might, and often did, carry things with a high hand, but the instinct and love of liberty, the constitutionalism which is born with and ingrained in him, made him at the time of trial recoil from being stigmatized a despot."

Many of us are anxious (he observed) that we should have representative institutions, a Parliament in India. That is the goal we must all work to. But can we say that we are at present prepared for such institutions?... Is it not necessary for us, especially the educated, to set ourselves to work to educate the people in this important matter? While doing this on one hand, preparing a public opinion, a public voice, and a body of public men, is it not necessary that in England a Society should exist which should have, by its judicious and proper advocacy, by the weight and influence of its conduct, acquired an influence so as to be prepared, when wanted, to fight the last and greatest battle of representation in or for India?

The lecture evoked great enthusiasm. It roused the energy and quickened the imagination of the citizens of Bombay. At a large and influential meeting of representative citizens, held on May 22, the Bombay Branch of the Association was formally inaugurated.

Dadabhai then went on a lecturing tour, particularly with a view to enlisting the support of the ruling Chiefs. Some of his Bombay colleagues, such as Dr. Bhau Daji and K. T. Telang, however, fought shy of those potentates who, they believed, were intellectually, morally and traditionally incapable of sharing the aspirations of young India or of furthering the objects that Dadabhai had in view. He was, however, of opinion, and that opinion was held by no less eminent a politician than Mahatma Gandhi,

that if leaders of society in British India excluded the Princes from their political activity, they would be letting a very useful power run to seed. Men of ability and influence in British India, said Dadabhai, should place their advice and services at the disposal of the feudatory chiefs, and they in turn should lend their financial strength in support of the activities of such leaders for the advancement of India. It was this belief that had prompted him, during the time he had been in England, to help Indian Princes on several occasions to tide over their difficulties. It was this belief that prompted them, too, to participate in the arduous work of national progress.

The result of his tour in Kathiawar justified Dadabhai's faith. The Princes received him kindly. Particularly from Cutch, Junagadh and Gondal he received handsome donations. His Highness Maharaja Shri Bhagvat Sinhji, Thakore Saheb of Gondal, who was an ardent admirer of Dadabhai and had befriended him all his life, convened a public meeting of his subjects to hear the Indian patriot. His address, breathing ardent love for his country, thrilled the good people of that State who had seldom heard a discourse on problems such as those presented to them, nor listened to so lucid and saintly a speaker.

Within a few months branches of the Association were established in Calcutta, Madras and other cities, and substantial donations poured in from the Indian States. Thus, for the first time in history, one might say, Dadabhai was able to arouse a distinctly national feeling in India.

## CHAPTER VI

### GRATEFUL APPRECIATION

**C**AUSTIC in his comment on public affairs, trenchant and unsparing in his criticism of the system of government and of the hauteur and indifference of officials, Dadabhai eschewed bitterness. His intense earnestness, his transparent sincerity and selflessness and his sweet reasonableness and moderation, lent a peculiar charm to his speeches and extorted admiration even from members of the English community in India, intensely sensitive though it then was to criticism of the British administration. There was a consensus of opinion that this ardent patriot, who had dedicated his time and talents to the sole mission of educating the people of India as to their rights, and the people of England as to their responsibilities, was rendering a national service.

About this time Pherozezshah Mehta had returned to Bombay from England. He was one of the proteges of Dadabhai whose sage counsel and inspiration (to quote Mehta's own words) had formed his character and elevated his ideals while he was studying law in England. Having witnessed the efforts made by Dadabhai in arousing the interest of the British public in Indian affairs, he told his countrymen, in his own impressive way, what sacrifices had been made by Dadabhai in discharging that patriotic duty. Seeing how a wave of enthusiasm had spread over the entire province and how the patriotic sentiments of the people had been stirred by Dadabhai's speeches, Mehta also started a movement for publicity appreciating the eminent services rendered by Dadabhai. Endorsing a suggestion made in *The Bombay Gazette* by a correspondent that the Sheriff of Bombay should soon give the public an opportunity of expressing their grateful appreciation of

Dadabhai's work, he said in a letter to that journal (January 21, 1869) :

I can personally testify to the high esteem and regard in which Professor Dadabhai is held and the value set upon his assistance and advice by not a few of the leading Indian officials 'at home'. Indeed, if I were called upon to point out the man most deserving to be styled the Sir Philip Sidney of Indian Renaissance, I would unhesitatingly single out Professor Dadabhai, and that after a close and personal knowledge of and intercourse with him. In his characteristic simplicity and unostentatiousness he may forget himself in rendering services; let us not forget him in acknowledging them !

The public of Bombay responded cheerfully to the call. "Since the days of Ram Mohan Roy", observed the *Native Opinion*, "no Indian had achieved a more distinguished reputation both in India and in England". Ram Mohan Roy's reputation was chiefly confined to his own presidency of Bengal, but, said the writer, Dadabhai's name was welcomed by his compatriots in all the provinces and most by the Indian Chiefs. This was all the more honourable to Dadabhai as he had been able to achieve that distinction without in any way gratifying their vanity or pandering to their prejudices.

Some of the leading citizens took counsel together, and it was resolved to present an address and a purse to Dadabhai. Why a purse ? Because they knew that in his devotion to the cause of his countrymen he had neglected his own interests. They also knew how the genius of eminent politicians was often painfully humiliated and impeded by the straits of embarrassed circumstances. Dadabhai was not the man who would open his lips to anyone about his private troubles, but they felt it was their duty to spare him such embarrassment. A sum of thirty thousand rupees was accordingly collected. Whether Dadabhai would accept such a testimonial to his public spirit was doubtful, but his fellow-citizens had discharged their duty.

Never before or after was a popular demonstration in India in honour of a "political agitator" so vitalized by the participation of the European population as it was on this



occasion. In the homage paid to the national hero the heart of the European residents beat in unison with the heart of the populace. There was a unique assemblage of the inhabitants of the City, European and Indian, at the Framji Cowasji Institute, on July 3, 1869, to do honour to Dadabhai. The address recalled the fact that wherever he had been, whether at home or abroad, he had disinterestedly devoted his time, talents and energy to the promotion of social, political and moral welfare of the people of India. It also referred in felicitous terms to his efforts in the cause of popular education and diffusion of useful knowledge, the spread of vernacular literature and the creation of a taste for reading in the Gujarati-speaking population of the Bombay Presidency.

Dadabhai was overwhelmed with joy when he heard his early activities recalled, one after another, with appreciation and warmth of feeling, but the purse handed to him as a "small token" of his countrymen's esteem and affection was a source of great uneasiness to him.

I accept the testimonials (he observed) which are more proof of your kindness than of my deserts, with great thankfulness. If I could consult my own feelings, I should hesitate to accept the purse. But certain circumstances with which I need not trouble you have made it necessary for me to avail myself of it. I hope, however, I shall not give any reason for dissatisfaction to those kind friends who have particularly wished me to accept the purse when I may be able to devote the generous gift to some purpose of public usefulness."

Out of the subscribed amount a sum of Rs. 25,000 was presented to Dadabhai, and the balance was kept for the cost of his portrait, which it was proposed to present to the Framji Cowasji Institute later. The greater part of the purse soon went to the East India Association. Owing to a defalcation on the part of an office-bearer of the Association, its financial condition had become so critical that Dadabhai took over the liabilities of that officer. There was not a ray of hope of recovering even a farthing, but there was the satisfaction that he had given a new life to the Institution.

There are men (observed *The Times of India*) whom, if we can feel sure of not spoiling them, the community does

itself good by publicly honouring, and there are times—very few, indeed, we admit—when it is suitable and in the true sense profitable to emphasize a unanimous public sentiment by a substantial gift. The conditions which render the testimonial of a community sincere and suitable, and which make appropriate a gift of money for private use, given to a man while yet in the midst of active life, are, we think, to be found in the circumstances which have resulted in the presentation to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. If there be any who have looked askance on Mr. Dadabhai's recent lectures and agitation because of their political character, we may remind them that there is very much in connection therewith in which the most conservative and timid can rejoice.

Dadabhai was yet in his prime; he was exposed to all the temptations strewn in the path of men in active public life. The testimonial was, therefore, a test of his moral fibre. It entailed on him new responsibilities and enjoined greater self-denial.

With the satisfaction that his mission on behalf of the East India Association had been crowned with success, beyond expectations, Dadabhai embarked on his fourth voyage for England. Little did he then realise that besides instilling new aspirations and hopes in British India his political propaganda had created an awakening among the Indian Princes. Much less did he realize the extent to which the sphere of his influence had been extended during those few months and the warmth of feeling of respect and admiration which his ability, integrity and patriotic fervour had evoked from the feudatory chiefs whom he had set thinking as to the extent to which his propaganda could be helpful in adjusting the relations between their Durbars and the Paramount Power. Still less could he have dreamt that the contacts thus established would give quite an unexpected turn to his own career and bring him back to India to offer advice and assistance to several Princes and to be installed Prime Minister of Baroda.

Arriving in England, Dadabhai attended a meeting of the Association held on October 29, 1869, at which a paper on the question of means of transport in India was discussed. Welcoming the decision of the Government to construct railways in future by raising loans instead of by

giving concessions to private enterprise and guaranteeing payment of interest on their stock, he pointed out that under the system of giving companies a guarantee, all the losses arising from waste fell upon the State, while the profits mostly went to the guaranteed companies.

The question of adulteration of cotton in Bombay, the cottonopolis of India, then came under discussion. The Bombay Cotton Act of 1869 contained penal provisions for preventing adulteration. In a paper on the subject Dadabhai contended that no case had been made out for such stringent and hampering penal provisions as were embodied in that Act. The discussion on the paper had the desired effect; the obnoxious measure was dropped.

During the years 1870 and 1871 the principal topic of discussion was Indian finance. Within six weeks, between June 15 and July 28, 1870, no less than four papers dealing with the subject in all its bearings were read and discussed at great length; one on "Indian Finance" by I. T. Prichard, another on "Public Works in India" by Sir Bartle Frere, another on "Wants and Means of India" by Dadabhai, and the fourth on the "Finance of India" by Sir Charles Trevelyan.

In the year 1871, the number of members of the Association ran into four figures and its influence began to be felt in Parliament. At Dadabhai's instance, Henry Fawcett, dubbed "the Member for India", had begun what became the annual custom of moving a resolution in the House of Commons favouring "simultaneous examinations" for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service. Moreover, whenever Indian questions were discussed in Parliament several M.P.s, prompted by members of the Association, or inspired by its discussions, spoke with knowledge of the wants and wishes of the people and brought informed criticism to bear on the solution of Indian problems.

The Civil Service question loomed large in the proceedings for the year 1871. Amongst the other subjects dealt with during the year may be mentioned "Popular Education in India", by William Tayler; and "The Means of

Ascertaining Public Opinion on Indian Affairs" by Sir Bartle Frere, a paper which was discussed at three sittings. In the year 1872, I. T. Prichard raised the question of "Representation of India in Parliament". This was followed by papers on "The Progressive Capabilities of the Races of India in Reference to Political and Industrial Development" by Hyde Clarke, "What the True Interests of Manchester Really Are in India" by Dr. George Birdwood and on "Trusteeship as the Basis of Imperial Policy" by Major Evans Bell.

The work of the Association was growing apace; it needed a centre; it had to equip and maintain a library; it had to build up an endowment fund to ensure its stability. The funds brought by Dadabhai from India were not sufficient for these requirements. He was once more proceeding to India; would he be good enough to send the hat round? Dadabhai cheerfully undertook the begging mission. Immediately on arrival in India, he made arrangements for placing the branch of the Association at Bombay on an efficient footing. He then toured Kathiawar and Rajputana to collect funds and to interest the Princes and the people of the States in the cause of the Association.

The City of Bombay was then convulsed by the powerful agitation of the people for reform in the machinery of municipal administration. Dadabhai threw himself into the movement, presided at a great meeting of the Bombay ratepayers and headed the deputation to the Governor of Bombay to present a memorial adopted at the meeting.

The Council of the East India Association was warm in its acknowledgement of the assistance rendered by Dadabhai at all times and in the most critical circumstances. It was stated in a minute that without such assistance it would have been almost impossible for the Association to carry on its work. The Council also placed on record its gratification at the large accession to the list of life members, which Dadabhai had been able to secure.



Even so handsome an acknowledgement could hardly have conveyed to the public an adequate idea of the infinite pains taken by the hard-working Secretary in approaching people to join the Association. Stenographers were not then to be had : Dadabhai had to carry on his voluminous correspondence and to write his minutes and contributions to the Press in his own hand. Likewise he addressed numerous appeals to friends, prominent citizens, and Princes, asking them to help the Association in its work of national importance.

Another glowing tribute was paid to Dadabhai at the annual meeting of the Association on July 17, 1872. In moving a vote of thanks to him, the Chairman of the Council, E. B. Eastwick, observed :

In respect of the Council's remarks regarding the Covenanted Civil Service, I cannot help thinking that in Mr. Dadabhai we have a gentleman who could have reflected honour on the Indian Government, had he been in their Service. Indeed, I can honestly say that I have never met a man who showed greater ability and more pure love of his country than Mr. Naoroji.

## CHAPTER VII

### A CROWN OF THORNS

**I**N a wretched little house in Padra a half-demented member of the royal house of Baroda was spending restless days and sleepless nights, raving and swearing and praying for the death of his brother Khanderao, the ruling prince of Baroda. Suspected of a conspiracy to get rid of Khanderao by sorcery, poison or violence, Mulharrao Gaekwar had been detained a prisoner in that house. Appeals made to the Government of India for his release were of no avail. The only hope for release lay in Khanderao's death.

On the morning of November 23, 1870, the prisoner was more restless and hysterical than ever before when he heard a rap on the door of his room. Simultaneously he heard a voice from outside, "Sircar!"

"Sircar! What mockery is this?", murmured Mulharrao as he stepped forward and opened the door and saw in front of him an officer of the British Residency in Baroda. He conveyed to the prisoner the news of the sudden death of his brother Khanderao and added that the Government of India proposed to put him on the throne, subject to confirmation by the Government of Queen Victoria. Mulharrao received the news solemnly.

Holding the reins of Government, he found himself the ruler of a territory where mis-government had reached its climax. A coterie of intriguers and blood-suckers had usurped all power; the impoverished population was groaning under extortion and tyranny. The wily *Durbaris* (courtiers) who were responsible for their misery wanted to pull him one way; his friends, who had stood by him during his incarceration and who now aspired to be installed in positions of trust and responsibility, pulled him the other way, and Mulharrao considered it his duty to

reward such adherents. He had been placed on the *gadi* as Khanderao had left no son behind him. But in view of the possibility of a posthumous son being born to one of the Maharanees of the deceased Maharaja, a new party had sprung up in the Durbar, consisting of those who were openly in support of the prospective mother. There was also a group, consisting of trimmers, who endeavoured to please both sides.

Mulharrao was shrewd enough to see through the machinations of these parties, but instead of dealing with them firmly and taking steps to purify the administration, he allowed the situation to deteriorate. Owing to his weakness for women, parents of pretty girls, panderers and harpies easily ingratiated themselves with the Maharaja and were placed in lucrative positions. The management of the State revenues was treated as a personal *giras*, and enormous sums were taken as *nazarana* from those to whom the revenues were farmed out and who in turn enhanced fourfold the exactions from the public. People abandoned their homes and estates to escape oppression. There were large deficits, which were made good by robbing the hereditary Sirdars of their dues. The administration of justice was a mockery; whoever offered the highest sum received a verdict in his favour.

Intoxicated by the unfettered powers and unrestrained pleasures placed within his reach, Mulharrao scarcely realized that Baroda was drifting from bad to worse during his regime. Nemesis was, however, overtaking the man. Soon he was involved in a dispute with Government on the question whether he was justified in giving the Governor of Bombay, at a ceremonial function, the seat on his left instead of on his right. Meanwhile, he received an invitation to attend the Viceroy's Durbar in Bombay in the month of November, 1872. He decided not to go, fearing he might be given a seat not befitting his dignity. His Durbaris warned him that it would be regarded as an insult to the Viceroy, but he was adamant. They then suggested that he should consult Dadabhai in the matter.

Dadabhai was then in Indore in connection with his begging mission for funds from the princes and people of India to support the activities of the East India Association. Wherever he went, whether in British India or in the Indian States, he created a profound impression as an ardent and selfless worker in the cause of his motherland, anxious to enhance the prestige of the States and of their rulers as well as of the people in British India. He could get nothing from the depleted coffers of the Baroda State. But he had been well received a few months before in Baroda and presented "Court Dress" with the blessings of the Maharaja.

A telegram was sent to Dadabhai to go to Baroda. On his arrival he was apprised of the problem worrying the courtiers. After hearing them, he was of opinion that the Maharaja should attend the Durbar in response to the Viceroy's invitation.

"Maharaja," he said, "you must attend the Durbar. The Viceroy must not think that you have deliberately avoided to attend."

"But I have resolved *not* to go. We invited you here to find out a way to carry out my resolve, without offending the Viceroy."

"I can find none, Your Highness," said Dadabhai, gently but firmly. "It would give me great pleasure to fall in line with your wishes, but I cannot conscientiously advise you to do what, I fear, might be harmful to you."

With these words Dadabhai took leave of the prince. The Durbaris feared the Maharaja was riding for a fall. One of them ran after Dadabhai and implored him to think of some way of averting the impending disaster. Dadabhai retraced his steps and sat in a corner, meditating how the Maharaja could be shielded from the consequences of the deliberate insult he was determined to hurl against the highest representative of the Queen in India. At last he found a clue. A few days before, Maharanee Mhalsabai had prematurely given birth to a girl who died within a

week. The mother was unwell. With these facts in the background he waited again on the Maharaja.

"I understand you have found a good excuse", said he to Dadabhai. "Tell me forthwith what it is".

"I advise Your Highness," replied Dadabhai, "to go to the Durbar, but if you must find an excuse not to go, you have one in the illness of the Maharanee Saheb Mhalsabai. You may send a telegram stating that having given birth to a child prematurely, she is very ill; that her condition is worse on account of the death of that child and that in the circumstances you cannot attend the Durbar."

Greatly relieved, the Maharaja nodded acquiescence. He then asked Dadabhai to suggest what could be done in regard to the larger issue raised by the Bombay Government about his seat in his own Durbar. The Government of Bombay wanted to humiliate him; he would never submit to it. As regards that issue, Dadabhai sympathized with Mulharrao. It might have been vanity, but for once the depraved prince appeared to be thinking in terms of self-respect and dignity. Dadabhai concurred in his opinion that there was no necessity for a departure from the practice which had been in vogue for half a century.

"Maharaj," he said, "a good case can be made out for the maintenance of the *status quo ante*. I would advise you to send a memorial to the Viceroy and another to the Secretary of State."

The Maharaja asked Dadabhai to draft the memorial. In it he recalled the varied services rendered by the Baroda State to the British from the earliest times down to the dark days of the Sepoys' Revolt, when the Gaekwar had identified his own cause with that of the British Government. It was in view of the 'exceptionally' cordial and loyal relations of the State with the British Government that it had been 'exceptionally' honoured in several ways, one of which was the privilege allowed to the head of the State to sit on the right in his own Durbar. That honour was enjoyed by it from the very first occasion on



which a Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, was received in 1820. Since then, with all the Governors who had visited the Durbar, with Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, and with His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh at Bombay, the Gaekwar had taken his seat on the right. Why should the State thus honoured in the past be now dragged down from its high and proud position, as if it had been guilty of some disloyal act? Then Dadabhai turned to his Bible—Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858—and recalled the words: "We shall respect the rights and dignity and honour of Native Princes as our own." On that promise the Maharaja relied.

The Government of India, however, refused to reopen the question. The memorial addressed to the Secretary of State for India was not forwarded. Another memorial drawn up by Dadabhai was thereupon sent direct to the Secretary of State, but before it could be considered officially and a ruling given, a crisis developed involving the termination of the Maharaja's rule.

Misgovernment in Baroda impelled the Paramount Power to appoint a Commission to investigate various charges of misconduct and misrule against the Gaekwar. For the first time Mulharrao realized the need to put his house in order. It was, however, a task beyond him and his courtiers. It needed a Hercules to cleanse the Augean stables. He himself needed a Samson on whose arms he could lean for support in defending himself against the charges. Looking around for a strong, competent and independent man on whom he could rely, his eye fell on Dadabhai who was then 7,000 miles away in England.

The urgent invitation to Dadabhai to accept the office of Dewan of Baroda was the greatest surprise of his life. The capital of the Gaekwar was famous for the acrobatic feats of its gymnasts and wrestlers. No less were the Durbaris noted for high vaulting in the arena of statecraft. The Maharaja himself was no mean athlete in that arena. Was Dadabhai a match for those gladiators? He hesitated to accept the invitation, not because it came to him at the

eleventh hour when the house was already on fire, but because he felt it would be over-ambitious on his part to accept such a highly responsible administrative office. As a sagacious friend, Sir Bartle Frere whom he consulted warned him that it would be a terribly difficult task for him. Sir Erskine Perry and other well-wishers, however, urged him to accept it. Though for his own sake Sir Erskine would have counselled Dadabhai against accepting such an appointment, he was of opinion that for the sake of good government and for British interests, as well as for the Gaekwar's, Mulharrao could not have made a better choice.

Those words of encouragement infused in Dadabhai all the courage he needed to undertake the duties of the Dewan, terribly difficult though they seemed to be. He had himself repeatedly advocated that Indians of high educational attainments and moral character should be given opportunities to render their services to the cause of good government. When such an opportunity was offered to him, how could he hesitate?

Reports had already reached him in England of a concerted agitation against his appointment as Dewan instigated by the British Resident in Baroda and the wily old Durbaris who were then in power. Such an opposition, however, he was prepared to face. So long as he could get the confidence and the co-operation of the Maharaja he would do his best for Baroda. The fateful decision was thus taken. Dadabhai hastened to Baroda. Not for love of position, not for power or patronage but for service in a good cause, he was prepared to take risks. Arriving at the Maharaja's capital, he told the ruler: "I am not accepting your service for gain or glory. My ambition is to bring about, with your kind co-operation, reform in the administration of your State. As long as I have your confidence and feel I am useful, all my energy will be at Your Highness's disposal. But the moment I find that the mutual goodwill is lost, or that my usefulness has ceased, I shall go."

Assuming the reins of office, burying himself, so to say, under a pile of state papers and *daftars*, Dadabhai commenced toiling earnestly to cope with the daily increasing volume of work which kept him busy for not less than sixteen hours of the day. But many months were to run before the Dewan-designate could be formally placed on the Prime Minister's *gaddi*. The Resident, Col. Phayre, could not understand how a man of high principles as Dadabhai was reputed to be, could ever consent to serve a man of Mulharrao's character. He could put it down only to love of influence and authority. The main reason, however, of his reluctance to recognize him as Dewan of Baroda was Dadabhai's "invariable line of conduct towards the British Government." Hostile also were the myrmidons of Mulharrao and men of the previous regime who were driven out of office and power. They spread the report that the British Government would not give their consent to the appointment. The Maharaja himself seemed to vacillate under their influence. The Dewan-designate consequently felt paralysed at the outset in his efforts to do anything useful.

Eager to do his best, despite all difficulties, Dadabhai looked around to secure capable lieutenants. Whom he would have loved to have as his immediate assistants can be gathered from a letter from S. S. Bengalee (January 12, 1874). "I am glad to learn that you have put yourself in communication with Mandlik, Ranade and Nana Moroji. If you have men like these about you, the administration of Baroda will, I am sure, become in one year a model for others to imitate and will prove what, good a purely educated native Government is capable of accomplishing." It appears, however, that none of the three was willing to serve a State so stormy and so discredited. Dadabhai was, however, able to get three gifted and devoted men to assist him—Kazi Shahabuddin whom he appointed Chief Justice, Bal Mangesh whom he put in charge of the Revenue Department and Hormusjee Ardeseer Wadia who was appointed Chief Magistrate and

was placed in charge of the Criminal and Police Departments. Wadia was also Dadabhai's right hand man as Personal Assistant to the Dewan.

When according to usual custom, Wadia had to make his *nazar*, or offer his present, to the Maharaja, before he could assume charge of his office, he could not conceal the feeling of loathsomeness which crept over him on seeing Mulharrao for the first time. What a contrast between the monarch and the Prime Minister in appearance, demeanour and mental and moral endowment! In appearance the Prince was the reverse of princely, undersized, coarse-complexioned, his presence uninviting, his eyes looking different ways and lips kept asunder by projecting black teeth. Dadabhai, who was standing by, saw what emotions were then stirring his talented and refined personal assistant. After the ceremony was over, he whispered to Wadia: "I could see from the changes on your face that you did not like the look of the Maharaja." "What a man to serve!" exclaimed the young barrister, mustering all the courage he could command to unburden his mind to his Chief. "But Homi," said Dadabhai, with his hand on the youth's shoulder, "we have not come to serve the man; we have come to serve the cause."

The Commission of Inquiry was busy recording evidence. In its report it condemned the highly arbitrary and unjust proceedings of the Maharaja. It recommended that the Minister should be selected with special reference to his administrative experience and personal and other qualifications for the post and should have such support from the Resident as may be necessary to enable him to carry out efficiently and satisfactorily the functions of his office.

The Bombay Government thereupon informed the Government of India that, though Dadabhai stood high in the estimation of many in India and England and would make every effort to introduce a better system of government, he would be powerless for any reform of abuses in view of the unworkable arrangements proposed

to be made in deference to the wishes of the Maharaja, namely, that the previous Dewan, the Maharaja's brother-in-law, should remain under the title of *Pratinidhi* and that the new holders of the four chief departments of Government should have associated with them the members who were previously in charge. It offered to recommend another fit person to the Gaekwar for nomination as his Minister.

The men of the previous regime urged that a complete defence of the Maharaja's conduct should be sent to the Viceroy. Dadabhai, however, thought that no useful purpose would be served by raking up the past. The Maharaja should merely state that he proposed to put things straight within a year or two with the help of his Dewan. He might add that he was prepared to give a guarantee for good government for the future. "That would mean", said the Maharaja, "that I accept the verdict of the Commission." "Not necessarily", contended Dadabhai.

A few days later, when the sun was in the meridian, the Maharaja's State coach stopped at the Dewan's house. He asked Dadabhai to join him. After having proceeded a few yards, the Maharaja told Dadabhai that he had on reconsideration decided to send to Government a reply as suggested by him. The reply should, he said, be sent immediately. This was one of those lucid intervals when Mulharrao's conduct and demeanour left nothing to be desired. The Durbaris were outwitted. The reply was sent before they could sabotage it.

Slowly but steadily the new regime was manifesting its advantages. The reorganization of the different departments was actively pursued; new systems and improved methods of work were introduced. The head of the revenue department toured provinces and cheered the afflicted peasantry by his personal assurance of projected measures to relieve them of the heavy burden of taxation. The pernicious system of selling justice to the highest bidder was stopped, but not without a tussle with the ruling Chief.



The police force was also purged of abuses. A new era of even-handed justice and efficient administration was opened in lieu of the old form of government corrupt to the core. Meanwhile came a despatch from the Viceroy. While overruling the Government of Bombay, the Calcutta authorities preferred to hold the Gaekwar himself responsible for the good government of the State with a warning that if he did not reform the administration by the end of December 1875, he would be deposed from power. The choice of the Minister was left to His Highness.

There was rejoicing in the Maharaja's palace, but wailing in the Residency. The Durbaris made a dead set against Dadabhai. He was still the Dewan-designate, they could still unseat him. However, despite their intrigues and the threats of the Resident that he would bring Dadabhai down, Mulharrao issued a note to the effect that military honours be accorded to Dadabhai as Dewan. On September 4, 1874, his fiftieth birthday, the Dewan was invested with the insignia of office amidst public rejoicing. None, however, knew better than Dadabhai that it was a crown of thorns that was being placed on his head.

The Resident continued sending to the Government of Bombay despatches impeaching Dadabhai for a number of sins based on gossip, half truths and falsehoods, and suggested that his appointment as Dewan should not be formally recognized. The authorities, however, warned him that his "determined opposition" to Dadabhai was inconsistent with the orders of Government and that he should afford the Dewan every assistance and accord to him the usual military honours.

The Resident, nevertheless, continued to be hostile. It was high time the Maharaja should demand, and he did demand, that the Resident be recalled. The enraged officer forwarded the Maharaja's despatch to Government with a communication from him characterising everything written in it as false. The Government of India, however, ruled that he had thoroughly misunderstood the spirit of the instructions given to him and that the duties of Resident

at Baroda could no longer be entrusted to him. The Government of Bombay was also blamed for not having realized "the gravity of the situation." The Secretary of State for India, Lord Salisbury, was even more vehement in the condemnation of the conduct of the Resident.

With the arrival of the new Resident, Sir Lewis Pelly, life in Baroda wore a different aspect. The administrative machinery began to run smoothly. All the pending cases were taken up one by one and equitable settlements reached. But funds were needed to pay all just claims. Dadabhai suggested payment from the Maharaja's privy purse. It was but fair, he held, that a portion of the public funds wrongly appropriated towards private ends by the Maharaja should revert to the public. The Maharaja insisted, on the advice of his followers, that the amount required should be raised by a loan or taxation. Mulharrao now began to make Dadabhai feel that he was not indispensable. It was a different thing when the enemy was at the gate. Nothing was now left to hold together the two men, who stood poles apart in their outlook on life.

It was a terrible ordeal to work with such a ruler. Dadabhai frequently asked that he might be relieved of his duties as Prime Minister. But the Maharaja implored him to continue. At last Dadabhai tendered his resignation. The Resident persuaded him to remain in office until his successor was appointed. But the perverse Prince declined to choose anyone as Dewan.

One day, when Dadabhai paid his customary visit to the Resident, he was asked whether he had definitely made up his mind to relinquish office. Dadabhai replied in the affirmative. Thereupon Sir Lewis said he wished to tell him something but that he would like to know beforehand for certain that after having heard the news, he would not change his mind. "You might depend upon it", said Dadabhai. The Resident then told him that important confessions had been made by a Havildar and others con-

cerning an attempt to poison the former Resident, Col. Phayre, incriminating the Maharaja.

Could he leave Baroda when such a serious charge was laid at the door of the Maharaja? If he decided to stand by the ruler as his Dewan, what about the assurance given to Sir Lewis that he had definitely decided to go? After examining all the pros and cons he came to the conclusion that he must adhere to the decision to go, and he and his colleagues gave over charge to the Indian officers whose services had been lent by the British Government. On January 11, 1875, when Dadabhai and his colleagues left for the station the Gaekwar, who professed to be very sorry and sick at heart, went with them to the station. Till the moment of departure he went on persuading them to remain and stood on the platform, watching the train as it steamed slowly out of the station. He then proceeded to his coach to return to the palace. As soon as he was seated, he smacked his thigh, as an expression of glee, and said to his attendants, with a smile, "Now you have seen how I managed to get rid of that man!"

On that very day there was a great movement of troops from Poona to Bombay. Reaching Bombay, Dadabhai and his party saw a regiment despatched to Baroda. Another followed the day after. Hearing of the arrival of troops, Mulharrao feared he was nearing a crisis. He sent a telegraphic message to Dadabhai to go to Baroda with Wadia. It was a problem for Dadabhai. He had good reason to resign his office as Minister. But now that the ill-fated prince asked him to be near him during the trial, could he refuse to go as a friend in need? He asked Wadia to see him at once. On his way to Dadabhai's house, Wadia saw at the office of the *Times of India* a placard with these words in bold type : "ARREST OF MULHARRAO."

"What is the use of our going now?" Wadia asked Dadabhai. "Nemesis has overtaken the man!" Nevertheless, Dadabhai asked Wadia to go to Baroda as a lawyer to watch the case on behalf of the prince. Although

complicity in the attempt to poison Col. Phayre could not be proved, the British Government decided that the Maharaja should be deposed on counts other than those which formed part of the indictment, namely, notorious misconduct and gross misgovernment.

The arrangements were kept secret pending the orders of the Secretary of State, but rumours of annexation of the State were rife all over India. There was an uproar in England. English journals, including *The Times*, condemned the Government of India for taking proceedings against the Maharaja on insufficient evidence. It was reported that Whitehall was not in favour of the Calcutta proposals. At last, however, the orders of the Secretary of State were received, sanctioning the deposition and deportation of the ruler.

Hearing this, Mulharrao prayed that his infant son by Lakshmibai, a married woman whom he had taken to his Zanana and married subsequently, should be recognized as heir apparent. The request was refused. The widow of Khanderao, Maharanee Jamnabai, was allowed to adopt a member of the Gaekwar family as his successor. Happily, she adopted one who, every inch a king, was destined to give a new life to Baroda, to change the face of its history, winning for himself the richly deserved title of "The Modern Bhoj", to wit, Sayajirao Gaekwar.

After the necessary precautions had been taken for the maintenance of order in case of disturbance, Mulharrao was taken secretly to the station yard and put in a special train, which was held there in readiness. On the same day Wadia and Bal Mangesh were passing in a carriage through one of the streets of Baroda when, all of a sudden, the driver pulled up the reins to enable a man to throw a note into the vehicle. It was from the Maharaja, addressed in Marathi to Bal Mangesh :

They say they want to depose me. I asked that my son should be put on the throne. They refused. I gather that they want to send me to Madras. Do what you can for me.

Your sinful  
MULHARRAO

At once the two ran to the station to find out whether he had already been, or was about to be, spirited away. A special train was in readiness alongside. Seeing them, the Maharaja came out of his compartment on the corridor. "Salam!" he said in a low voice. "I am going!" Then, with his fingers, he made several gestures, which they could not make out. One of his attendants, who happened to be there, explained to them that Sircar desired that they should wire to Dadabhai. So the perverse ruler to whom the departure of a valued Dewan from the State was a matter of rejoicing, only a few days ago, now believed in the hour of trial that if anyone could save him, or save the throne for his son, it was Dadabhai!



## CHAPTER VIII

### IN THE CIVIC CHAMBER

**T**HE wear and tear of those thirteen hectic months in Baroda necessitated, under medical advice, rest and change for four months at a health resort, Tithal near Bulsar. Thereafter, fully restored to health, Dadabhai was free to occupy himself in congenial pursuits.

Was he downhearted? The Dewanship had proved a veritable crown of thorns. To have shaken it off was a relief, although it must have caused him much anguish to have been torn from his work when he had just succeeded in laying the foundations of good government in the State, routing the forces of evil in circumstances that would have appalled the boldest. Once more his two esteemed British friends came forward to infuse courage in him. "It has been a matter of regret to both of us," wrote Sir Bartle Frere on behalf of himself and Sir Erskine Perry, "that you were not allowed an opportunity of carrying out the reforms you desired, and thus making one of the most interesting experiments possible in a Native State. But you have the consolation of having done your best. I do not see that any human being could have done more under the circumstances."

Returning to Bombay on July 26, 1875, Dadabhai joined the Municipal Corporation as an elected member from the same ward in which he was born fifty years ago. In the civic chamber he soon made his mark. His knowledge of public finance, his proficiency in mathematics, skill in marshalling statistics, and faculty for analysis, combined with his volcanic energy, assiduity and resource, created a profound impression on his colleagues. Within three months he was elected member of the then Town Council (Finance Committee) of the Corporation.

Dadabhai discovered that, in calculating the instalments of capital and interest payable to Government for the liquidation of a loan given to the Corporation for the construction of Vehar Water Works, the Accountant-General had adopted a method involving additional payment of Rs. 50 lakhs by the Municipality. The Accountant-General maintained that he had merely acted in consonance with the provisions of the Municipal Act.

Additional minutes were written and representations were submitted to Government and the Secretary of State for India. Meanwhile Dadabhai had to resign office as councillor to proceed to England to attend to the business of his firm. The ability and individual effort bestowed by him on the loan question and his masterly minutes were for his colleagues a marvel of patriotism and zeal for civic work and public welfare. Another exhaustive minute, written by him on a subject far more intricate and technical, impressed them even more. The Water Department had proposed construction of additional water works. Dadabhai questioned the accuracy of the calculations regarding the daily supply of water to the city on which the demand for additional supply was based. As the Municipality could not supply the additional particulars he wanted, relying on his own calculations he arrived at the conclusion that the system of distribution of water was defective and indicated how a constant supply of fourteen gallons per head to the City could be arranged.

The minute was sent to the Municipal Commissioner for departmental comments. By the time his report was received, Dadabhai had relinquished his seat on the Council. Such a unique record of work for guarding the financial interests of the Corporation evoked general appreciation. A special vote of thanks was accorded to him. Unprecedented as was this tribute, a still higher honour was in store for him from the civic body on the occasion of his historic visit to Bombay in 1894 after his election to the British Parliament by a British constituency.

The controversy with Government concerning the Vihar Loan went on for years. It was revived by Dadabhai when he joined the Corporation for the second time in 1883 and was not over until he returned to England in 1886 in search of a constituency for election to the House of Commons. During this period of three years he applied himself to civic work with the same zeal as before and his contribution as a member of the Committee appointed to report on proposals for the amendment of the Municipal Act was greatly appreciated.

In August 1875, a movement was set afoot to take steps to accord a cordial welcome to the Prince of Wales (subsequently King Edward VII) on his visit to Bombay. Dadabhai was a prominent subscriber to the fund raised for the purpose. His name also figured in many a list of subscribers to various other funds for the relief of people afflicted by floods in Ahmedabad and for the promotion of the general welfare of the people.

Early in the year 1876, a Bill was passed limiting the jurisdiction of the civil courts throughout the Bombay Presidency in respect of land revenue. It introduced a dangerous principle, making revenue officers independent of the civil courts. At a public meeting held in the Town Hall of Bombay, it was resolved to send a memorial to the Secretary of State for India. Dadabhai took an active part in the agitation and had a hand in drafting the memorial.

Such civic activities were, however, overshadowed, so to say, by his prolonged and dazzling effort to establish his thesis that India was being impoverished more and more and that the administration of the country was mainly responsible for the tragedy.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE POVERTY OF INDIA

**I**F anything contributed to Dadabhai's popularity as a political leader more than any of his patriotic endeavours, it was his phenomenal labour and research in establishing the grinding poverty of the masses which culminated in his lifelong crusade for the amelioration of the economic condition of the people. Others before him had shed tears on the growing impoverishment and wretchedness of the people, but none brought home to the rulers and the world at large so vividly, as he did, the fact that, sunk though she was in poverty, India had the lordliest and costliest administration in the world. The inevitable consequence of foreign domination is the drain of the wealth of the subject nation from its country to that of the rulers. In the case of India, the extravagant cost of administration intensified the disastrous effect of the drain. Of the destitution and misery of India and of the extent of the drain of its resources to England, the British people had then no idea. Dadabhai, therefore, set himself the arduous task of combating the lordly administration and exposing the astounding extravagance of the rulers.

Official data were inadequate and misleading. Blue books provided little information on the subject. Non-official sources of information were practically dry. The study of political economy and sociology had not yet been introduced in the universities of the country. Particulars concerning classification of the cultivated area were not available, nor were statistics of average yield per acre for different crops anywhere to be found. Price statistics were incomplete and scarcely accurate. None the less Dadabhai dedicated all his energy to the task and by his own rough and ready method came to the startling conclusion that the yearly income per head of the population was only 40

shillings, roughly equivalent to Rs. 20. That preliminary step in the investigation of the condition of the country formed the subject matter of a paper on "Wants and Means of India" read before the East India Association on July 27, 1870.

It was but one of a series of papers read subsequently on the Poverty of India and Indian Finance. During the days of which we are speaking India was in a chronic state of deficit. A petition was sent to the Secretary of State for India, praying that the finances of India might be placed on a satisfactory footing. A memorial was also presented to Parliament, praying for the appointment of a Select Committee of both Houses, to inquire into the general administration of Indian territories. A Parliamentary Committee was accordingly appointed. Dadabhai submitted to it for consideration "a few remarks"—only 16,000 words! The sudden dissolution of the Parliament (in 1874), however, led to the Committee's extinction. Dadabhai had yet to write many a minute and read many a paper and publish a bulky book on *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, raise many a debate, call for many an inquiry, and himself sit on a Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, appointed as demanded by him and his British friends on the floor of the House of Commons, to suggest an equitable adjustment of financial relations between India and Britain.

Before a meeting held under the auspices of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association in the year 1876, Dadabhai read a paper on the subject of the poverty of India. Two years later, it was published in London in pamphlet form. The object was to adduce further evidence in support of his statement that the country was sinking more and more into poverty and that the system of government of the country was largely responsible for it. He made it clear that with insufficient and imperfect material at his command, he could give only approximate results. Despite its incompleteness, however, Dadabhai's thesis was the most illuminating contribution to the pro-



blem of Indian economics. Its method of approach was rough and ready; its manner of handling and sifting statistics all his own; the process of reasoning and the principles adopted in arriving at conclusions highly debatable. Nevertheless his estimate of the income per head of population, Rs. 20, was approximately as accurate as it could then have been. The best corroboration of his calculations was the estimate given by Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) and Sir David Barbour in the year 1882, namely Rs. 27 per head. Despite the increase in agricultural and industrial output during the subsequent years, Lord Curzon's estimate in 1901 was only Rs. 30.

Examining the figures of imports and exports between the years 1835 and 1872, Dadabhai pointed out that the value of exports exceeded that of imports by £500,000,000. This, he contended, did not represent the total tribute which India annually paid to England. Had interest been calculated the drain would have amounted to a higher figure. He, then, quoted statements made by British officials to establish the main contention that most of the ills of India were due to the heavy tribute which she had to pay to England. For example, one of the Commissioners of Revenue in the Deccan, who afterwards became a member of Council, Saville Marriot, had stated in a letter written in the year 1836 that India had been "verging to the lowest ebb of pauperism" and that it would be "difficult to satisfy the mind that any country could bear such a drain upon its resources without sustaining very serious injury."

To drive the argument home to the English people, Dadabhai held up before the audience the following picture, given in Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, of England herself, when she was a tributary to the Pope.

In England—for ages a mine of wealth to Rome—the tendency of things was shown by such facts as the remonstrances of the Commons with the Crown on the appointment of ecclesiastics to all the great offices, and the allegations made by the 'Good Parliament' as to the amount of money drawn by Rome from the Kingdom. They asserted that it was five times as much as the taxes levied by the King, and

that the Pope's revenue from England was greater than the revenue of any prince in Christendom.....The population, sparse as it was, was perpetually thinned by pestilence and want. Nor was the state of the townsman better than that of the rustic; his bed was a bag of straw, with a fair round log for his pillow....It was a melancholy social condition when nothing intervened between reed cabins in the fen, the miserable wigwams of villages, and the conspicuous walls of the castle and the monastery....Rural life had but little improved since the time of Caesar; in its physical aspect it was altogether neglected....England, at the close of the age of faith, had for long been a chief pecuniary tributary to Italy, the source from which large revenues had been drawn, the fruitful field in which herds of Italian ecclesiastics had been pastured.

India needed industrialization on a large scale. Industry was limited by capital. Where was capital to come from? The drain of India's wealth to England entitled her to demand capital from England on easy terms for the development of her trade and industry. The infant industries in India were smothered in the name of free trade. Young colonies, said Mill, needed protection. But, asserted the Indian economist, if the drain of wealth were brought within reasonable limits, India would be prepared to accept the doctrine of free trade.

Dadabhai's business interests had receded into the background ever since he took upon himself the work of the East India Association. The interlude of the Prime Ministership of Baroda and of his monumental work to point out to the rulers the extent of the impoverishment and misery of the people of India left little time for him to look after his own affairs. He would have retired from business altogether, but for want of other means to support himself, he had to keep up his connection with his firm. It appears from the correspondence carried on with his partners from 1876 to 1881 that he had to encounter many difficulties and had to pay constant attention to the transactions of his firm. It was not, however, a profitable business. A letter from Dady Dosabhai Cama, who held Dadabhai's power of attorney to look after his business in England during his absence, shows that once more Dadabhai was the victim of his own good nature in trust-

ing and helping others. "I am really very sorry," wrote Cama, "to see that there are very remote chances of your getting any money from Mr. M. . . . . There is no hope when people play so false. . . . . As the case now stands, you will never be able to make up the former loss, coupled as it is with great deficit of Mr. M. Would it not be, therefore, advisable to wind up this firm's business immediately so that people who may have dealings with you may run the least risk?"

Dadabhai accordingly decided to wind up the business of his firm and to continue business on his personal account, booking all orders to the Camas direct. Despite all such difficulties and ordeals, his thirst for knowledge of public affairs and his zeal for investigation and collection of statistics, returns, reports, books and calendars concerning the material condition of India, remained unabated. There never was before and during his lifetime a more avid buyer of Blue books than this lifelong student of Indian economics. Cama bought for him cartloads of official publications including information concerning salaries of Civil Servants, budget estimates and administration reports for each year. Nevertheless, the publisher who could completely quench Dadabhai's thirst for figures could not be found! "Messrs. Harris", said Cama in one of his letters (September 30, 1881) "are trying to find out the Blue Book you mention, 'East India Salaries, etc.' They don't find any, but there is the Budget Book of this year which would not contain salaries, etc."

After some time Dadabhai began to collect volumes of Hansard. "We have already purchased from Hansard," wrote Cama in a letter dated June 1, 1883, "complete volumes from the year 1844 to 1882. . . . . For years before 1844 Messrs. King had a large number; these also we have secured for £40; so there are really now very few numbers wanting to make the whole complete. What we have secured comes to about £145 to £150."

In India, too, the search for statistics was unending, including University Calendars. The Madras University

Calendars did not include a complete list of undergraduates from the commencement of the University. Dadabhai applied to the Registrar of the University for it but was told that he could compile it himself from the annual list given in each Volume! No detail was too insignificant for the warrior bent on combating the blundering and blustering bureaucracy in India.

With Sir David Wedderburn, William Wedderburn's brother, who was then a member of the House of Commons, Dadabhai took up the question of salaries and pensions of European employees in the different departments of the State. It was part of the larger issue of Indianization; and the particulars called for were essential to gauge the extent of the drain. Between the years 1876 and 1878 Dadabhai carried on a prolonged correspondence with Sir Erskine Perry concerning the question of the Indian Civil Service. Although the Act of 1870 provided for the admission of a limited number of Indians to the Service by nominations, no rules were framed under the Act to give effect to the provisions. The authorities seemed determined to ignore all demands and overlook all assurances; but, thanks once more to Dadabhai's perseverance, the rules were framed in 1878.

In H. M. Hyndman, the famous socialist of the day, Dadabhai found a helpful friend. He was an ardent student of Indian economics, and the drain of India's resources weighed on his mind almost as heavily as on Dadabhai's. Both felt convinced that the authorities in India were working up to a crisis and that there should be a sustained clamour against it in England as well as in India. Both were in constant communication and consulted each other ever since Dadabhai had commenced bringing to the notice of the British public the appalling poverty of the people of India. How the acquaintance began is narrated graphically by Hyndman in his *Reminiscences* :

I had finished my paper, and was about to send it off to the *Nineteenth Century*, feeling that I had not been able to put the statistical part of it as clearly and convincingly as it should

have been put, when I strolled into Messrs. Kings, the Parliamentary booksellers....As I left the shop, I noticed a booklet from which the cover had been torn, and the words 'The Poverty of India' in heavy block letters on a white ground stared up at me. If the cover had remained, I certainly should not have noticed it. 'What is that'? I asked. 'Only a mass of figures', was the reply. I at once seized the little volume and found that Dadabhai Naoroji had therein placed at my disposal precisely the statistics about India which completed my own work. The article was published under the title Mr. Knowles chose for it, 'The Bankruptcy of India', as the first paper in the *Nineteenth Century* for October 1878.\*

Hyndman's indents on Dadabhai for statistics and returns concerning the condition of India were scarcely less formidable than those of Dadabhai on Government departments and booksellers and publishers. Dadabhai cheerfully kept him posted with the information he wanted as well as current Indian news. A constant writer of articles in the columns of newspapers and periodicals on the dry topics of Indian economics and administration, no less voluminous than those of Dadabhai, he stirred up criticism of the British rule in India even on the Continent. Dadabhai was profoundly thankful to his socialist friend for thus standing up for the helpless and oppressed against the strong and autocratic. No less grateful was Hyndman to the Indian patriot for furnishing information and literature which were of great help to him in writing on India and Indian finance. In one of his letters (August 2, 1882) Hyndman revealed that his hopes for reform in India as well as England centred in a great upheaval in England. "Nothing can be done for India", said he, "until we have a Revolution here. The upper and middle classes will not listen and do not care. I am, therefore, striving to bring about a Revolution by peaceful means, if possible, but at the critical moment I should not shrink from force, if we were strong enough. The mass of the people here are in a deplorable state and worse, I sometimes think, than your starving ryots and famished labourers of Bombay and Madras—for they have at least the *Sun*."

\**The Record of an Adventurous Life*, p. 171.



"We are slowly working on to a great upheaval here," he added. "When it comes, India will reap the benefit too.....Honestly, the cause of India, by itself, has gone back with the upper and middle classes during the last year or two. With the working class it has made progress. To them and them only you must look for justice."

Dadabhai agreed. In his reply (September 4, 1882) he said, "If the labouring classes are moved, there is no doubt much good will be done. You have undertaken a very difficult task—a peaceful revolution—and I wish you heartily every success. Yes, this charge on India for the Egyptian contingent is very wrong. The Liberals seem to be eating their own words. The feeling of despair comes over me sometimes, but perseverance is absolutely necessary."

The most notable correspondence carried on by Dadabhai during this period was that in which he strove to bring home to Lord Hartington, Secretary of State for India, the full facts and implications of the deplorable condition of the country. When he wrote his paper on the Poverty of India, he had not sufficient time to work out in detail the averages for all the items of production in different provinces of India, but with the Administration Report of the Punjab for 1876-77 in his hands, he worked out the averages of all the production tables given in the report. He asked the authorities that his tables might be referred to the Statistical Department of the India Office with instructions to point out errors, if any. The India Office expert, F. C. Danvers, pointed out what he considered were flaws in Dadabhai's calculations. Dadabhai was then very ill and under medical treatment; but within a month he was ready with a crushing rejoinder (September 13, 1880).

When an expert is set on an expert, the result almost invariably is confusion. Danvers called attention to the fact that Dadabhai's calculations had not taken straw into account. Dadabhai justified the omission not merely of straw but of grass, cotton seed, and other fodder or food for

animals on the ground that it made no difference to the ultimate result. "Either the whole gross annual production of the country may be taken (including straw, grass, etc.)", he observed, "and from this gross production, before apportioning it per head of human population, a deduction should be made for the portion required for all the stock", or, as he had done, "all straw, grass, and every production raised for animal food should be left out of the calculation, and only the rest of the production which is and can be turned to human use should be apportioned among the human population." When Hyndman saw this correspondence, he wrote (October 27) : "I have read what you have written with great interest, especially rejoicing in your complete overthrow of that ass Danvers. I do really believe that ere long your noble labours must be crowned with success."

Many an argument followed which it is unnecessary for us to examine. While the author of the paper insisted on ignoring the fact that income consisted of utility and that services which had a utility value could not be left out of account in computing the national income, the official apologist discerned no difference between individual and national income. There was one redeeming feature, however, in Dadabhai's estimate. He had cautiously provided Rs. 33 crores under the heading "Contingencies." This provision atoned for the omission to evaluate services and it is no little tribute to his skill that his estimate of the *per capita* income of Rs. 20 stood the test of all subsequent research in that field.

The Secretary of State was then presented an interesting memorandum by Dadabhai on what he described as the moral poverty of India. He urged that the same drain which was responsible for the material exhaustion of India was responsible for the moral loss to her of the experience and wisdom acquired by the members of the Services in the execution of their duties.

Europeans occupy almost all the higher places in every department of Government directly or indirectly under its

control. While in India, they acquire India's money, experience and wisdom; and when they go, they carry both away with them. Thus India is left without, and cannot have, those elders in wisdom and experience who, in every country, are the natural guides of the rising generation in their national and social conduct and of the destinies of their country; and a sad, sad loss this is! There may be very few social institutions started by Europeans in which Natives, however fit and desirous to join, are not deliberately and insultingly excluded. The Europeans are, and make themselves, strangers in every way.

If the material and moral destruction of India continued, warned Dadabhai, a great convulsion would shake the country to its foundations. The Secretary of State was the highest authority on whom the responsibility of governing India rested. He alone had the power, as a member of the British Cabinet, to guide the Parliament to acts "worthy of the English character, conscience and nation." The glory of the British in India was in his hands. He had to make Parliament lay down how India should be governed for "India's good."

Failure to give redress, added Dadabhai, in a prophetic strain, would drive the people to a boycott not merely of British wares but of British rule. After this warning was sent a protest against the growing autocracy of the authorities in India. England was raising in India a body of Englishmen accustomed to despotism "with all the feelings of impatience, pride and high-handedness of the despot gradually ingrained in them." If Britain's policy was bad, that of the previous conquerors had been worse. That, however, was no excuse for the injustice complained of. "If the British do not show themselves to be vastly superior in proportion to their superior enlightenment and civilization," urged Dadabhai, "if India does not prosper and progress under them there will be no justification for their existence in India."

After a condemnation of various other aspects of British rule came final words of anguish explaining why he had been obliged to harp perpetually on the painful topic of the iniquities of the British administration.

It is no pleasure to me to dwell on the wretched, heart-rending, blood-boiling condition of India; none will rejoice more than myself if my views are proved to be mistaken. The sum total of all is, that without any such intention or wish, and with every desire for the good of India, England has in reality been the most disastrous and destructive foreign invader of India.... This unfortunate fact is to be boldly faced by England;.... I am writing to English gentlemen, and I have no fear but that they will receive my sincere utterances with the generosity and love of justice of English gentlemen.

The hopes for redress "at England's hands and conscience" were, however, doomed to disappointment. Before Committees and Commissions, before the House of Commons itself as a sitting member, he pleaded patiently for redress year after year during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but to no purpose. Instead of a change for the better he witnessed year after year a change for the worse in the attitude of the bureaucracy which refused to believe that its lordly administration was impoverishing India and piling on her load over load of debt. Worse still, the bureaucrats in office were getting intolerant of the criticisms and warnings of loyal Indians such as Dadabhai.

He, therefore, decided to make another effort to bring to the notice of the world the misery of his hunger-stricken countrymen and the evils of political subjection by publishing all his scattered papers and pamphlets, correspondence with State officials, evidence before Committees and Commissions, speeches and addresses on the subject, together with extracts from old State papers, statutes and proclamations. The result was a somewhat chaotic compilation—a bulky book in a red cover, containing nearly 700 pages of statements and speeches extending over a period of nearly thirty years, entitled *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.

The title of the book reflected the change in his feelings. The most moderate among Indian politicians was driven to resort to language marked by bitterness born of a sense of continued injustice. There were two sides of the book—the economic and the political. It was, in fact, an approach to politics through the door of economics.

On the economic side were treated the topics of production and distribution, taxation, railways, foreign trade, prices, wages, currency and exchange, public debt and income, and the drain. In spite of the somewhat imperfect presentation of the various issues, the book threw new light on the questions discussed, and it is read and referred to even to this day by students of Indian economics. On the political front it dealt with such subjects as the goal of British policy in India, the admission of Indians to higher grades of the civil and military services, the relations of the Secretary of State for India and of the British Parliament with India, the question of representation of Indians in the Indian Legislature, the Indian States and the possibility of a Russian invasion. On these issues Dadabhai had to say many unpleasant things. He was so overcome by a sense of repeated injustice that his usual sense of scrupulous fairness appeared to have been somewhat dimmed. The book was certainly not free from exaggerations such as the statement that "the lot of the unhappy Indian natives was somewhat worse than that of the slaves of America," or that it was the constant drain to which should be attributed "her famines and plagues, destruction and impoverishment."

On the whole, however, it was clear that while on the one hand the author found the policy of the rulers "un-British and suicidal," on the other hand he was convinced that if true British rule were substituted for the pseudo-British system of Government, which he deplored, the result would be "a blessing to India and a glory to England, a result worthy of the foremost and most humane nation on the face of the earth."



## CHAPTER X

### NEW ERA OF RIPON THE RIGHTEOUS

**B**Y the end of the year 1881 Dadabhai's business firm in England was closed. Returning to India, he found that during the regime of Lord Ripon as Viceroy of India there had been a change for the better in the administration of the country and in the spirit of the people. One of the heartening acts of the liberal-minded Viceroy was the appointment of an Education Commission in 1882. Dadabhai submitted a statement of his views relating "a sad, sad tale." Marshalling statistics at his command, he demonstrated that wretched as India was materially, still more wretched was she educationally.

As a remedy he welcomed the two resolutions adopted by Lord Ripon's Government. One of these laid down that the people should be taught and led to self-government. The real foundation of constitutional progress was local self-rule. By learning to manage their local affairs people qualified themselves for self-government in wider spheres. The other resolution enjoined that stores of local manufacture should be purchased. Dadabhai suggested that a further step should be taken along the path of *swadeshi*. As in the case of dead stores, so in the case of living stores—the Services of the State—there should be an order that they should be supplied locally "from the manufacture of the educational institutions of the country" with the exception of a few superior supervising, guiding and controlling agencies.

On February 1, 1882, was published Dadabhai's monthly journal *The Voice of India* with the object of securing a fair hearing and justice for India. He himself was the Voice of India, but that voice had to be reinforced by that of others. To give the British public an idea of the feelings and wishes of the Indian people, Dadabhai arranged

to publish in Bombay a monthly journal corresponding to *Public Opinion* in England. It provided a compendium of all that was valuable in the Indian journals on the leading topics of the day. It was not intended to advocate views of its own, but merely to reflect the opinions set forth in the Indian Press and to serve as an interpreter between the subjects and the rulers. The object was to promote a "sustained and intelligent interest in the welfare of the Indian Empire and it was hoped that members of Parliament, journalists and authors desirous of studying Indian questions would welcome such a publication." Dadabhai financed it for some years, and B. M. Malabari conducted it during his absence from India. It was a splendid, self-sacrificing effort to promote the end in view. Dadabhai bore the loss till 1890, when it was incorporated with the *Indian Spectator*, Malabari's famous weekly.

Of all the Viceroys of India, Lord Ripon was unquestionably the most popular. His abounding affection for the people of India, his earnest desire to broaden the basis of their liberty, and his transparent sincerity earned for him the title "Ripon the Righteous". A public meeting was held under the auspices of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association, on February 17, 1883, to memorialize the Queen Empress for an extension of his term of office. Dadabhai was the principal promoter of the meeting. He recalled Ripon's words that his ambition was to rule India not as a ruler but as a friend. Ripon, he added, was destined to be not only the saviour of the Indian people but also the "greatest patriot of England."

Dadabhai was also the moving spirit of another public meeting held in Bombay to support the Criminal Jurisdiction Bill called the Ilbert Bill after the name of the Law Member who introduced it in the Viceroy's Council. Under the law no Indian judge could then try a European on a criminal charge except in the presidency towns. As a number of Indians were then about to reach the higher rank of the Civil Service, it was considered necessary to confer on them the same rights and privileges as those

enjoyed by their European colleagues. The object of the Bill was merely to remove an anomaly in the existing legislation and to establish equality before the law of all classes of people.

The introduction of the Bill, however, provoked an extraordinary outburst of racial feeling and virulent agitation on the part of the European population which regarded it as an encroachment on their prerogative. The Viceroy was abused and vilified and his action was denounced by the European residents in Calcutta at a public meeting held in the Town Hall. A confederacy of blusterers had been formed, who, it was reported, bound themselves "to overpower the sentries at Government House, to put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal Ghat, and to deport him to England!"

The Bombay meeting was held by the Indian population, as a counterblast to the Calcutta meeting, in fairness to the magnanimous Viceroy and his colleagues who had shown great forbearance under grave provocation. A public meeting was also held in London at Willis's Rooms, St. James's (August 1), in support of Ripon's "Native Policy." It was presided over by John Bright who told his countrymen in a spirited address: "India is not committed to our control to be held as a field for English ambition and for English greed."

Racial passion and racial bias had from the commencement been the curse of British rule in India. But none expected such a hysterical outburst of racial passion from the European community. Since those days the political leaders of the country drew a sharp distinction between the liberty-loving British people and the Anglo-Indians, resident in India, intoxicated with their notions of racial superiority. The liberal traditions of the early years of the nineteenth century and the pronouncements of liberal-minded statesmen had encouraged Indians to look forward to the day of withdrawal of British power from India, not with convulsions but with mutual respect and goodwill. Now, however, it seemed, in the light of embittered

feelings, that liberation from alien domination would entail a bitter struggle. To have engendered such a feeling amongst the Indian population was the greatest disservice to the cause of the British Empire in India.

A year later, Ripon laid down the reins of office. He had striven earnestly, undeterred by opposition from within his cabinet and from without, to redress the grievances of the people, to further their intellectual progress and to train them in the art of self-government, thereby translating into action pledges solemnly given by Queen Victoria and the representatives of the Crown and reviving the fading faith of the people of India in British justice. Among those who wished that such a noble Viceroy should have a royal send-off and that the people of India should raise a fitting memorial to mark their appreciation of the righteous spirit that had inspired all his measures for reform, Dadabhai was one of the foremost. At the public meeting called for the purpose, he supported the principal resolution appreciating the services rendered by Ripon to India and England alike and announced donations for the proposed memorial. By far the best service rendered by Ripon was, declared Dadabhai, to England and Englishmen. He had raised the name and glory of England and confirmed India's loyalty to the British rule.

One of the first fruits of the awakening caused by the Ilbert Bill agitation was the establishment in 1885 of the Bombay Presidency Association. During the new era inaugurated by Ripon there had been a great awakening among the people. Indian opinion had acquired a weight and power seldom attained before. The political leaders therefore considered it an opportune moment to mobilize the opinion of all the sections of the population and to concentrate it on questions of vital importance by founding a virile political association. Accordingly at a public meeting held on January 11, 1885, the Bombay Presidency Association was formally inaugurated. Dadabhai was elected one of the Vice-Presidents. "I look forward to the day," said Pherozeshah Mehta, the Lion of Bombay, "when

the younger generation would produce men like Dadabhai Naoroji."

At Dadabhai's instance the Association sent a delegation of prominent Indians to England to support at the General Elections the candidature of those who had sympathized with and helped Indians in their political aspirations. Not one of the favoured candidates was, however, elected, but the delegates were successful in securing hearing from thousands on Indian affairs.

The most important event signaling the new era was the inauguration of the Indian National Congress. Of the founders, the most conspicuous was A. O. Hume, an ardent supporter of India's struggle for freedom. At the first session of the Congress in Bombay on December 27, 1885, Dadabhai moved a resolution praying for simultaneous Indian Civil Service examinations in England and India. One could also discern his hand in the drafting of all the resolutions passed at the Session, particularly the very first resolution which approved of the proposed appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into the working of the Indian administration, to the study and scrutiny of which he had practically devoted his life.

Nothing promoted the unity of the country and the people's sense of nationality so swiftly and so strikingly as the Congress. Nothing justified so vividly as this national organization Macaulay's historic minute in favour of imparting to the population of India knowledge of literature and science through the medium of the English language, despite the chagrin of the Orientalists who foreboded serious injury to the people from such a violent breach with their traditions. All the proceedings of the Congress were conducted in English and even the declaration of India's independence and the new Constitution, more than fifty years later, were drafted in the same language.



## CHAPTER XI

### ANOTHER PEEP INTO DADABHAI'S HOME

WE have traversed a long distance since we had a glimpse into Dadabhai's home. It is time we had another. During his absence in England Dadabhai's pupil and friend Muncherji Dadina looked after his family. The families of both lived on such intimate terms that three matrimonial alliances were formed while the brides and bridegrooms were yet in their teens. Dadabhai's son Adi was engaged to Dadina's daughter Vir, his first daughter Shirin to Dadina's son Fram and his second daughter Maki to Fram's brother Homi.

Adi had been taken to England at the age of five. After he passed the Matriculation examination, it was arranged that he should qualify himself for the Indian Medical Service. An active member of the Volunteer Corps, he had one day the misfortune of a gun carriage going over his left leg and arm. The injury disqualified him for medical service. Returning to Bombay, he joined the Grant Medical College and obtained the Anderson Scholarship for proficiency in Surgery.

A keen sportsman and a gay soul, he gave Dadina, a quick-tempered, orthodox Parsi and a stern disciplinarian, much anxious thought. Adi's fondness for firearms was the chief cause of difference between the two. Into the upper segment of the leg already injured by accident, he sent a bullet while he was cleaning a rifle. Soon afterwards there was another mishap. A revolver loaded and placed on the table went off and damaged some articles of furniture. Dadina, thereupon, asked a friend to keep the arms in his custody. No wonder, the weekly letters which Dadabhai received did not always make pleasant reading.

The pocket allowance of Rs. 3 given to each child by Dadina was considered so small that one of the girls called him a perfect Marwari. Dadabhai increased the allowance but wrote : "The prospect before us is not of a very cheering character. The children must live in a way which they may not have with regret to give up afterwards."

There was also a conflict of views concerning religious rites. Dadabhai asked Adi not to interfere in the observance of social and religious customs and hurt the feelings of elders. Adi was not quite happy at home. "He complains", wrote Dadina, "that he has no social comforts at home. Gulbai wants to control the son and the son insists on controlling the mother." Without waiting for the final examination for his degree, Adi wanted to marry and have a congenial companion by his side. All the members of the family wished that Dadabhai should be present at the marriage ceremony. Dadabhai, however, asked them not to wait for him as his presence in London was necessary. "Adi's marriage will be a simple affair as you suggest", said Dadina. "He has pitched on the Dewali Day—the day last year he sent the bullet in his thigh. He says he wants to make us merry on that day this year." Happily, Adi's marriage brought sunshine in his life. In the following year Dadabhai became the grandfather of a girl. Two years later, Adi took his degree of Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery and was placed in charge of the Civil Hospital in Cutch Mandvi.

In connection with the next alliance in the family, Muncherji Dadina found the tables turned against him. He insisted on his son Homi marrying Maki before proceeding to England to prosecute his studies. Homi, supported by his fiancée, rebelled against the idea. Dadabhai agreed with them and Homi went to England. Until he returned home as a qualified engineer, unyoked to an English girl, his father had no peace of mind. Maki, who took her medical degree later, married Homi on her return to Bombay. Being a spirited girl, she too refused to give

way to Muncherji Dadina on several occasions and Dadabhai had to make rough places smooth.

Barring such incidents, the weekly flow of letters from his dear ones was a source of joy to Dadabhai. He could not bear the idea of missing even occasionally the weekly budget of news. Amid the splendid cares of his patriotic mission in England, his letters break out into longings for news concerning the family for a line at least from each of them. Adi's three sons and five daughters also wrote charming letters to grandfather. The predicament of grandfather and grandchildren is exquisitely reflected in one of the letters from Dadabhai to the children (September 2, 1897) :

Maki writes to me "as they sit down with their pens in their hands, saying what shall we write every week to father?" Now, my dear children, I shall be satisfied even if you only say, "We are well." I like to have letters from you all. You may write to me what you have done at school during the week—just as you told me a lot of things when I was in Bombay and saw you all in the evening. Write what you hear, what fun, if any, you had at school or elsewhere."

Grandfathers have their joys heightened by grandchildren but, not infrequently, their sorrows are also increased owing to bereavements in the family. In the year 1875, Dadabhai had to mourn the loss of his mother, dearer to him than anything else in the world. Another stunning blow was to befall him in the year 1893 when he lost his only son Adi.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN SEARCH OF A CONSTITUENCY

**H**OW and when the impulse to enter the House of Commons came to Dadabhai is not known. From the correspondence he carried on with British friends it seems that at least a year before he moved the Bombay Presidency Association to send a delegation to England to support the candidature of those who had made the cause of India their own, he had been endeavouring to ascertain whether he himself would be acceptable to any constituency. It was then a mere phantasm, the most romantic dream of his life which he kept to himself. Martin Wood, former editor of *The Times of India*, was one of the friends he consulted. "As to your candidature some time next spring," wrote Wood on December 12, 1884, "I think the way will open by that time if your strength can only be husbanded. We must, meantime, recall your personality to some of the men who knew you so well when you were in England before, but who may be forgetting now ; L.M.G. (Lal Mohun Ghose) is going ahead."

Ghose was one of the candidates supported by the Association's delegation. He had, however, let down friends who had supported him. In another letter (May 1, 1885) Wood stated that after having addressed enthusiastic audiences and having been unanimously accepted, he had declined to stand for Woolwich. The reason probably was lack of funds. That is an incident, added Wood, "that might well satisfy your resolve to be well supported before coming to England." Although the delegation failed to get a single candidate out of those favoured by it elected to the Imperial Parliament, its success in getting a very sympathetic hearing from thousands who listened to the speeches of its members on Indian affairs encouraged Dadabhai to cherish the idea, fantastic though it seemed at the moment,

to woo a British constituency. It could not, however, be kept a secret any longer.

In September 1885, *The Indian Mirror* was the first to welcome the news that Dadabhai contemplated contesting a seat at the ensuing Parliamentary election. He did not yet reveal the stirring of his mind to anyone, but continued preparing the ground for the venture before proceeding to England. On March 13, 1886, *The Hindu* of Madras announced that Dadabhai intended to leave India for England with a view to standing as "a candidate for election to Parliament on behalf of some constituency". "As an authority on Indian economics", it was added, "there was none equal to him in all India." Other newspapers were equally enthusiastic.

The die was cast. The prospects of success were far from encouraging, but, thought Dadabhai, even if he failed to get into Parliament, there would be much scope for solid, substantial work to be done in England on behalf of India. If he could thereby promote the progress and welfare of India, his visit to the land of the rulers in connection with the election would not be unfruitful. Having done the necessary spadework in India and fortified himself with a bunch of letters of introduction to those who could assist him in finding a constituency, Dadabhai commenced his electioneering work in right earnest.

The first thing he did on reaching England was to call at the India Office. The first man he saw (April 14, 1886) was W. G. Pedder of the Indian Civil Service, who was Municipal Commissioner for the City of Bombay in 1876 when Dadabhai had raised the memorable debate on the question of the Vihar Water Works Loan and who after his retirement from the Civil Service was Secretary, Department of Revenue, Statistics and Commerce in the India Office from 1879 to 1883. Engrossed though he was in the electoral campaign, Dadabhai had not forgotten the Bombay Municipality. Handing Pedder a copy of the memorial sent to the Secretary of State regarding the outstanding problem of the Loan, Dadabhai asked for his help in the



matter. Pedder promised assistance but suggested arbitration. He also asked for his good offices in regard to another loan for Tansa Water Works. Pedder took him to Under-Secretary Godley who told Dadabhai that some members of the Council "were very shy of it".

In an interesting interview with Dr. Richard Congreve, Positivist and political and historical writer, the question whether Britain's connection should be continued was discussed. Congreve thought it should be severed. It was injuring England and "doing harm to the whole English character". The connection with the Colonies was a weakness. Dadabhai differed. He contended that the connection should be continued for the sake of India. If certain reforms, which were sorely needed by India, were carried out, urged Dadabhai, the connection would be a blessing to both. He gave as an illustration the poverty of India and its remedy. This, said Congreve, was just the thing which the statesmen would not dare to do. The English agency in India, he pointed out, was an immediate benefit and they would not give it up. . . . . "A separation must come in time when the people generally are sufficiently advanced for self-government and political knowledge. Statesmen like Salisbury and Hartington are afraid of this very thing, that Ireland being separated, India would come next for something similar, and this they consider the destruction of the Empire. We have not now to depend so much upon statesmen in Parliament. They only register the wishes of the people. They can do nothing. Statesmen like Salisbury and Hartington oppose this Irish Bill so vehemently, but Mr. Gladstone depends upon the support of the mass of the people. The days for the monarchy first, then for the aristocracy, are now gone."

The detailed account of his interviews with various influential politicians which Dadabhai gives in the Journal which he then kept for three months throws a flood of sidelight, as does the interview with Congreve, on various problems of British and Indian politics. We have, however, to cut a long story short. It is sufficient for our

purpose to note that after interviews with numerous friends and statesmen, some of whom discouraged him while others encouraged him, and after weighing the chances of success in contesting various constituencies suggested to him, Dadabhai was busy reconnoitring the battlefield and ultimately selected Holborn to be the most promising. On June 18, he met the Executive Committee of the local Liberal Association. After some discussion, a resolution was passed by the Committee, unanimously accepting Dadabhai as the Association's candidate. In his letter to the members of the Association intimating the choice, the Secretary to the Association described Dadabhai as "an eminent Native of India, who, from his lengthened residence here and the great interest which he has always taken in Indian and English political life, is highly qualified to represent any constituency as well as to advocate the special interests of India."

Holborn was no choice; it was a necessity. The electorate was strongly Conservative and positively against the policy underlying the Irish Bill. For anyone contesting the borough as a Liberal candidate there was not a ray of hope for success. More so for Dadabhai, who had emphatically declared Home Rule to be the golden rule. He could not, however, look back. Some of his friends thought, and he agreed, that even if he failed, it would mean something and that something was worth coveting.

At a meeting held at the Town Hall of Holborn, Dadabhai had spoken hardly for two minutes when he appeared to have held his audience by his straightforward statements and simple eloquence. Describing Dadabhai's debut an eye-witness observed: "Had Mr. Naoroji changed his name to Mr. Brown or Mr. Jones, no one would know him to be a Parsi. But Naoroji is a puzzler for the British elector . . . has the appearance and the manner of a cultured English gentleman, his face a shade or two off colour, perhaps, but certainly not darker than many an Australian, tanned from long exposure to tropical sun. If physiognomy be any indication of intellectual merits, Mr. Naoroji is

shrewd and penetrating, with a large leaven of benevolence . . . . His ample beard and moustache are plentifully sprinkled with white . . . . The regulation frock coat fits him like a glove, and a better platform figure it would be difficult to find."

Many meetings were held, numerous letters and appeals to the electors were distributed and enthusiasm was sustained till the day of the election. The prospects, however, were not at all rosy. In a letter which Hyndman wrote to Dadabhai on the eve of the election, he feared the contest might end in defeat but struck at the same time a cheering note :

You have your name well before the political world; you will, I am sure, poll well even if you do not win; and win or lose, you have made excellent propaganda for India in the heart of London, besides being certain of a seat next time.

Thus heartened, Dadabhai went to the poll. His Conservative opponent, Col. Duncan, had everything on his side—personal influence and wealth, the strong Tory character of the constituency, the antipathy of Englishmen generally to the Home Rule policy of Gladstone, and, above all, a split in the Liberal camp. It was nevertheless a tough fight, and a gallant fight, and though it ended, as apprehended, in Dadabhai's defeat, the Gladstonian Liberal from India secured 1,950 votes against 3,651 cast in favour of his Conservative rival.

Having made the best of a forlorn hope, Dadabhai lost not a moment in resuming the fight and commenced his second and more stubborn struggle which was to end, six years later, in victory. While he was thus preparing for the next contest, some of his friends in India keenly felt his want in his own country, where, they thought, he could more usefully occupy himself in active patriotic service. Malabari thought so too and wrote (August 31) :

In the Legislative Council we want a strong man. I don't like the ring of recent discussions therein. Your presence is thus in every way necessary. On the other hand, I know it is grievous to call you out now. You have commenced exceedingly well—and though the Conservatives seem to be stronger than I expected, still you need not quite despair of getting in. Even outside Parliament you can do more than any-

body or many other bodies put together....But the trouble is we are unable to help in the good cause without your being here, helping us to help the country. There is no organization without you here....All things considered, I think you better return by November or December....This will enable you to preside at the National Congress, Bengal, which you must do. Come here, kick up organizations, collect materials and go again, if you like.

During the last month of the year a call came to Dadabhai to attend the second session of the Indian National Congress. He went to Calcutta during Christmas week and was elected President of the Session. "What is it for which we are now met?" he asked. "Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government (cries of "No! No!") or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? (cries of "Yes! Yes!") . . . Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone."

The Congress was blamed for failure to tackle the problem of social reform. Dadabhai put in a vigorous plea in defence of the policy to eschew the problem :

"There are Mahomedans and Christians of various denominations. Parsis, Sikhs, Brahmos—men, indeed, of each and all of these numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India. How can this gathering of all classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? What do any of us know of the home life, of the customs, traditions, feelings, prejudices of any class but our own? How could a gathering, a cosmopolitan gathering like this, discuss to any purpose reforms needed in any one class? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed." This session of the Congress was notable for the scheme of Council Reform drawn up under the guidance of Dadabhai as President.

The Public Service Commission was then sitting in Bombay. Dadabhai had agitated for years and had published in England a paper on the question. Giving his evidence before the Commission, he stressed the demand for holding simultaneous examinations in England and

India, the standard of qualifications, pay, leave and pension allowances being alike for all candidates. Witness after witness appearing before the Commission supported Dadabhai's demand, but to his mortification concerted opposition came from Muslims who feared that if the examinations were held in India it would lead to a preponderance of Hindus in the Civil Service to the detriment of the interests of their own community.

With great chagrin Dadabhai learnt, after he returned to London, that his friend Kazi Shahabuddin had also joined in the opposition. On July 15, 1887, he wrote to Kazi in anguish :

How your action has paralysed not only our own efforts, but the hands of our English friends, and how keenly I feel this, more so because you have based your action on selfish interests, that because the Muhammadans are backward, therefore you would not allow Hindus and all India to go forward....In the House of Commons I think Mr. Bright has stoutly urged the necessity of an examination in India to put us on an equality with English candidates. Today when he would and could have urged the same thing with ten times the force, he feels himself staggered, and owing to your opposition he feels puzzled and cannot help us.



## CHAPTER XIII

### MEMBER FOR FINSBURY

**R**ETURNING to England, Dadabhai had little difficulty in canvassing the executive of the General Council of the Liberal and Radical Association for Central Finsbury. The Council had asked the Executive Committee to submit the names of four persons for the selection of a candidate to fill a vacancy. At the first election, out of thirteen candidates the Committee selected four of whom Dadabhai was the second. The first elected was Earl Compton. He, however, declined to stand and at the subsequent ballots Dadabhai stood first. He was also the first of the four selected at the final election on August 15, 1888. On the following day Edward Jacob, Secretary to the Association, wrote to Dadabhai : "Please allow me to congratulate you. The voting last night was as follows : Mr. Naoroji 49, Mr. Eve 45, Mr. Ford 23, and Mr. Dodd 7." Eve, too, congratulated his rival.

In his weekly letter to the family, Dadabhai wrote : "It has been a very good beginning. I have earned, as far as I can judge, respect and credit from all sides, from my opponents and friends." The family was prepared for the result earlier by Fram Dadina, then a student at Cambridge. In his letter to Maki Dadabhai he said : "Your dear Pa has just passed his Previous Examination in Politics. Just fancy the idea of an old man of 62 going in for such labour! Hope all of us will be half as useful. You will know more about it in a fortnight."

The rejoicing over the result of the examination was, however, for the moment premature. On the day following the letter congratulating him on the result of the election, Dadabhai was informed by the Secretary that a requisition for another meeting was being signed on the ground that there had been no valid election. According to an inter-

view given, a year later, by one of the scrutineers, named Brighty, to a representative of the *Holborn Guardian* (September 14, 1889), Dadabhai's own friends were responsible for the muddle in which the members of the Party found themselves. Immediately after the result of the votes taken at the last election had been announced, he said, Dadabhai's friends shouted 'hurrah' and rushed out of the room.

The final announcement had not been made, the final vote had not been taken, and the Chairman said he would not take the final vote that night, on account of so many leaving the room. There were several gentlemen near the platform who said: 'You must put the final vote and then we would demand a division'; but the Chairman thought under the circumstances it would be unfair to Mr. Naoroji's friends to put the final vote and to grant a division on that night, and he did not do so. I have no doubt as one of the tellers that if Mr. Naoroji's friends had acted properly and remained till the final vote was put and the division, if demanded, taken, the Chairman would have had to pronounce that Mr. Naoroji was the choice of the Council.

Strange that in the circumstances the Secretary of the Association should have written to Dadabhai, immediately after the meeting, congratulating him on his election. There was not a word in his letter about the protest or about the fact that the final vote yet remained to be taken. It is still more astonishing that F. Schnadhorst, the highest organizing officer of the National Liberal Federation, should have written to Dadabhai (August 18):

Pray do not be influenced by the attack on you. You have been fairly selected and it is our duty to support you. I will do everything I can.

In pursuance of the requisition a fresh meeting was held. Dadabhai declined to go to the meeting. It was suggested that the dispute be referred to arbitration. A deputation that waited on Dadabhai tried to impress upon him that they had been suggesting arbitration because they believed he was not strong enough and because they were anxious that the chances of the Liberal Party's success should not be jeopardized.

Weak or strong, Dadabhai was determined to go to the poll. He paid house-to-house visits to the voters, addressed meetings, gave numerous talks and lectures and kept

himself constantly before the eyes of the electors. The more he came in contact with them, the better was he understood. An election committee was formed to support his candidature.

Such support was, however, nothing compared to that given unwittingly by Lord Salisbury. While trying to explain why the Conservative majority in the latest Holborn contest had dwindled, the Premier of England stated: "It was undoubtedly a smaller majority than Col. Duncan obtained; but then Col. Duncan was opposed by a black man; and however great the progress of mankind has been, and however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man." "I am speaking roughly", he added, "and using language in its colloquial sense, because I imagine the colour is not exactly black, but, at all events, he was a man of another race."

Those two words—Black Man—kicked Dadabhai into fame. Wide of applicability to him as those words were, Dadabhai was more amused than annoyed by that "colloquialism" of Salisbury. In fact, he regarded such an attack on him as a blessing in disguise. In India, however, the impudent allusion to racial difference gave great offence. In England too, in Liberal circles particularly, the derogatory words were strongly resented. It was not a mere political partisan indulging in a sneer on a political platform. It was the Prime Minister of England, whose duty it was to strengthen the ties of loyalty and attachment between England and the countries owing allegiance to the Crown, who had thus offended millions of British subjects not only in India but also in the rest of Asia and Africa. Even his own friends therefore stood aghast at Salisbury's blazing indiscretion. The Liberal politicians lost not a moment in having the Premier pilloried. "That was no vulgar jingo of the street," said John Morley. "It was the Prime Minister. It was the man who spoke in the name

of the people of England from his position, and it was the fault of London that Salisbury held the position he did."

Speaking a few days later at Limehouse Town Hall, Gladstone asked the audience to look across the sea, where their responsibilities were so great. He was referring to the expression used by the Prime Minister which had given deep offence to many millions of their fellow-countrymen in India. Having committed that fault in an unhappy moment of forgetfulness, should he not have offered an apology? They waited for that apology, and the people of India waited for it. For the next few weeks, Salisbury's Black Man received letters from all parts of England, from friends as well as strangers, expressing their abhorrence of the language used by the Premier and their wish to see him enter Parliament. There were also invitations galore to teas and luncheons and dinners.

The tension in Central Finsbury regarding Dadabhai's candidature was relieved in June 1890 by the retirement of his rival. Dadabhai was left alone as the Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury. But a newly formed Liberal Association put up another candidate, avowedly with the concurrence of the Liberal Party. Dadabhai's relations with the party were painfully strained. The Finsbury tension grew worse. But at long last, the rival candidate withdrew from the contest, rather than split the party vote. Dadabhai was now left the sole Liberal and Radical candidate.

His views on English politics were well known to the electorate, but in the manifesto he now issued he made it clear that he adopted the entire Newcastle Liberal programme, and mentioned the principal measures for which he stood, including Home Rule for Ireland; Home Rule for London; endowment of the London County Council with full municipal powers; proper application of charitable endowments for the benefit of the people; women to be qualified for seats in the County Council; contribution by owners of property for public permanent improvements; rating of vacant land; representative Parish and District Councils; direct popular veto of the liquor tariff; extension of the Factory Acts; free breakfast table; graduated income-

tax on incomes above £300 on a sliding scale; inexpensive industrial courts; all labour questions with a view to justice and fair play to labour; and Indian reforms.

The electors went to the polling booth on July 5, 1892, and recorded a majority of three votes in Dadabhai's favour. The bare announcement of the voting was received by crowds with a tumult of applause. The sky was rent with cheers for "Salisbury's Black Man". The enthusiasm in England was as great as in India. The first to express his joy publicly was Gladstone. To the romance of Indian history was thus added a thrilling chapter. Hitherto a Bright, a Fawcett, Bradlaugh or a Caine had earned the gratitude of Indian people by strenuous advocacy of their country's cause on the floor of the House of Commons. Now their mantle had fallen on a son of the soil, who was endowed with the qualities and equipped with the knowledge required to plead on behalf of his motherland at the bar of that august Assembly.

Almost as much as Dadabhai was Central Finsbury overwhelmed by messages of thanks from all parts of India. The whole country was greatly moved by feelings of the deepest gratitude to the English constituency that had returned an Indian to the Imperial Parliament. Such a thing was possible only in a free country like England. The electors had shown that the instincts of political freedom and the fairness of the British public had triumphed. They had given a concrete illustration of the elasticity of the British constitution and demonstrated, better than all official declarations, the equality of British citizens, wherever born and brought up.

Four months later, the defeated candidate, Captain Pentan, filed a petition demanding a scrutiny, but the petition was withdrawn after six months. The election having been confirmed, it was celebrated in London on January 23, 1893, at one of the most enthusiastic meetings ever held in Forester's Hall, Clerkenwell. About two thousand friends and admirers of the Indian M.P., including several leading Members of Parliament and prominent citizens of



London, were present. In the absence of Lord Ripon, owing to illness, R. K. Causton presided.

I may tell you (he said) that a British military officer of distinction, speaking the other day, quite apart from politics, remarked that he believed that in the security of the Indian Empire the election of Mr. Naoroji would be more than equivalent to a brigade of infantry. The event is, indeed, unique in that it ushers in a new era in our relations with India. It shows that the claim of Englishmen that they are the pioneers of popular government throughout the world is not a myth but a reality....Dadabhai had gone to Parliament not only to raise his voice on behalf of his Indian fellow-subjects but also on behalf of those who desired progress and civilization in England, and who desired to bring peace, happiness, and contentment to all the people of these realms.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CONGRESS HIS DAILY THOUGHT

**E**LECTION to Parliament was only a means to an end, the welfare of India. After the inauguration of the Indian National Congress, India and Congress were inseparably associated in Dadabhai's thought. He spoke of them as though they were synonymous terms. How to rear the national organization during its infancy, how to bring it to the notice of the British public, and to bring home to it the pitiable condition of India, was his daily thought and constant concern.

During its early days, the East India Association afforded a good platform to stir up criticism and to create a strong impression on the authorities in England. But its direction had gradually passed into the hands of persons with not the same enthusiasm for Indian reform as that of their predecessors. Dadabhai, therefore, turned to some personal friends in the House of Commons for help in carrying on a crusade on behalf of India. Of these, the most ardent and active were William Wedderburn, W. S. Caine, and Samuel Smith. Hyndman, though not in the House, was no less helpful. He, however, differed from Dadabhai as regards ways and means. The situation in India appeared to him to be even more desperate than to Dadabhai. There was a growing feeling among people of his way of thinking that both England and India were on the verge of a serious crisis. It seemed to them that the only hope lay in a general shock. When Dadabhai was in India in the year 1884, there was a constant interchange of views on current politics between the two friends. In one of the letters Hyndman wrote from England :

I always told you that little could be done for India until we had a revolution here. That revolution I have been steadily preparing for and we Socialists are now the only growing

party in England. Throughout the country, especially in the great industrial centres, we have little knots of earnest, enthusiastic men. We have resolved to take up the Indian question and to work it thoroughly so far as we can.

Hyndman's talk of a revolution did not seem to have evoked any enthusiasm in the Indian patriot to whom constitutionalism was the very breath of life. His mind was at that moment greatly agitated by the outrageous conduct of the European community in India towards Lord Ripon and its open hostility to Indians. Unburdening his mind, he treated the Irish rebel to a sermon on moderation! In another letter he asked Hyndman to consider what could be done in regard to the question of the Services and the drain. Hyndman accordingly kept hammering away, whenever he got a chance, but he could never reconcile himself to Dadabhai's modest methods of asserting India's claims. "The time has gone for imploring, if ever it existed." He would like to see "a great stir".

While reading the voluminous correspondence of the period and the phenomenal propaganda carried on, one finds that what was uppermost in Dadabhai's mind during the first three years of his electoral campaign was the Congress. Not a week passed without letters from India and clippings from journals giving him full particulars concerning the progress of the infant organization in India, or without letters from him to friends in India, particularly to Dinsha Wacha who was General Secretary of the Congress, regarding his views, suggestions and exhortations to insure its healthy growth. Scarcely a day passed when the peerless propagandist did not speak or write to British friends about the national organization, which he introduced to them as the child of the British rule, or about the woes of his motherland.

This correspondence and propaganda give one an idea of the burning passion of the man for his country and of his daily thought, daily conversation, and daily plans for freeing his motherland from her state of subjection. Incidentally, they call to mind several obscure but interesting episodes in the early history of the Congress.

## DADABHAI TO MALABARI

*January 30, 1887*

Sir W. Hunter intends to write to disprove the statement that Mahomedans do not join the Congress. The *Times* correspondent from Calcutta grossly misrepresents everything....The Congress is exciting much interest here.

How keen such interest was could be seen from letters received by Dadabhai concerning the proceedings of the Calcutta Congress over which he had presided.

## SIR JOHN BUDD PHEAR\* TO DADABHAI

*July 7, 1887*

I wish very much that I could have been personally present at this great national gathering. The event is most significant and instructive and I trust that the lessons deducible from it will be rightly apprehended and understood by the governing classes in this country. As to this, however, I am not very sanguine. Those whose influence is at this time paramount in controlling the Government are the Jingo classes of the people, admirers of liberty and right in all wherein they are themselves concerned, but ever ready to over-ride and assert authority whenever their own will is disputed by those over whom they are able to domineer. The cause of the people must prevail ultimately, and the sooner our home democracy learns its power and exerts it, the better will it be for at least the Indian portion of the Empire.

## G. J. DAY TO DADABHAI

*August 16, 1887*

It is extremely difficult in Indian affairs to know how far to encourage volunteering; it would be most disastrous to England to find a fresh Indian Mutiny spring up and, at the same time, it is most illiberal to prevent by force a people fit to govern themselves from so doing.

## THE REV. FRED. TRESTRAIL TO DADABHAI

*January 3, 1888*

The enthusiasm so manifest astonished me. A people hitherto so quiet and impassive to be roused to such energy seems like life from death....I trust this grand debate will put to shame those English residents in India who are so apt to treat her people with scorn and contempt.

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\* Retired Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court

Within a short time, a cousin of Hume, Robert Muller, M.D., Surgeon-Major on the Retired List of the Bombay Army, became a supporter of the Congress. In a letter to Fram Desai, Dadabhai's nephew, dated December 3, he wrote :

Will you please tell your uncle (Dadabhai) that I am the 2nd cousin of Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, C. B. (late Secretary to the Government of India in the Agricultural Department)—that *if there be an Englishman more than another who considers the Government of India to be a 'despotism'—I am that man!* And if he will please to send me all the papers connected with the movement, *he may find me to be one of the most energetic supporters of the movement.*

#### DADABHAI TO MALABARI

December 15, 1887

In the present number of the *Indian Spectator* you have three times hit the political reformers, "who are always for equality between themselves and the English" .... Now, my dear fellow, what an amount of unnecessary mischief you are doing! By all means fight for the merits of your cause (social reform), but why unnecessarily discredit and discourage other important movements? One thing you may remember, that no people who are politically debased will ever be, and ever have been socially high. It is the political elevation which will give that backbone and stamina, that manliness which would give strength and courage to carry social reforms.... I do beseech you to consider the matter carefully.

October 19, 1888

Now that the Congress will have a hard fight, I fully trust you will give it your most unflinching and strongest support. On such an occasion we must sink all our small differences. The *Indian Spectator* must take a prominent and marked share in the struggle.... No half-hearted work will do at present. Assure Hume that you will do all you can to support the Congress. He feels somewhat disappointed with you. He is our best friend. Give him every assurance and help you can. We cannot do less both in gratitude to him as well as for the sake of the great cause now at stake.

March 23, 1890

I have been feeling much depressed by the extracts from the *Indian Spectator*, sent by the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times*, against the Congress.



## DADABHAI TO HUME

*January 5, 1888*

It is desirable that Native States should be allowed to take an interest in and help the Congress and even, if they choose, to find delegates....A solidarity of this kind between all the people of India is a thing to be desired.

## DADABHAI TO WACHA

*February 9, 1888*

My stay with Sir W. Hunter has been of some good in that he has seen more clearly than before the necessity of larger admission of natives into the Services.

## DADABHAI TO MALABARI

*April 18, 1888*

I hope Mr. Hume will be able to bring round Syed Ahmed and prevent the opposition to the Congress. The disunion among ourselves will do us very great harm. Here, interest in India is growing gradually, but this split will check it very much.

That split in the Congress to which the letter referred, now a forgotten chapter in the early history of the Congress, became a nightmare to Dadabhai. As apprehended by him, it led to a combined virulent agitation against the Congress from the Anglo-Indian and Muslim communities.

Soon after the third Session of the Congress, the bureaucracy in India fell foul of the movement. The growth of the Infant Hercules had alarmed officialdom. It seemed to the Anglo-Indian community to spell the subversion of the established order of things. Some Parsis and Muslims also feared that the Congress agitation might end in the substitution of Hindu domination for foreign domination. The worst "crime" of the Congress was the propaganda carried on and agitation launched by Dadabhai in England in the name of the Congress. He had succeeded in enlisting the sympathy and support of several British friends such as William Hunter who had openly declared that the political forces represented by the Congress were so great that the British Government, if it sought to thwart them,

would break itself in the attempt. Dadabhai's daily distribution of Congress literature and his daily appeal to the strong sentiments and cherished principles of justice inherent in the English race considerably influenced English opinion in favour of the national movement. For Anglo-India that was the most disastrous phase of the agitation. Already, no less an authority than Gladstone had declared that the capital agent in finally determining the question whether the British power in India was or was not to continue, would be the will of the 240 millions of people who inhabited the country. "It would not do for us", he observed, "to treat with contempt or even with indifference, the rising aspirations of this great people."

Following Dadabhai's advice, the Congress Executive sent to England in 1890 a delegation to appeal to the British public to support the Congress in its demand for reforms in the administration of the country. At the meetings addressed by the delegates, Surendranath Banerjea, R. N. Mudholkar, Allan Hume and Eardley Norton, resolutions were enthusiastically adopted in favour of the reforms and petitions were sent to the House of Commons praying for the acceptance of the Congress proposals for Council Reform. A series of lectures delivered by Bradlaugh on Indian affairs was the most outstanding feature of the propaganda.

There was a clamour in Anglo-Indian circles that the Congress should be checked from speaking on behalf of India. The officials were, however, of opinion that the best way to kill the Congress was to have countrywide demonstrations against it. A carefully prepared countrywide propaganda was accordingly launched against the Congress. Its right to speak on behalf of the people was challenged at meetings. Tracts and pamphlets and subsidised journals were sent to England to spread anti-Congress literature. There were many influential men behind the opposition, including Syed Ahmed and Syed Husain Belgrami, the Nizam and Nawab Salar Jung. Such systematic opposition to the infant organization made Dadabhai very apprehen-

sive about the future. The clouds, however, soon dispersed. Despite the cannonade of inimical criticism, the Congress forged ahead.

### DADABHAI TO WACHA

*September 21, 1887*

Let the Mahomedans go ahead. This development of a new force will ultimately prove of use to India. It is good that they are roused to some activity.

*July 27, 1888*

I hope you will be able to do something about Digby's proposed Agency (for officially representing the Congress in England). He is the best man we can have for the purpose and without some such worker here our labours will not fructify rapidly enough....He has time as well as energy and knowledge.

*August 31, 1888*

I hope that Telang, Mehta and others will seriously take this matter into consideration. All this means money, and money must be found; for a time, self-sacrifice of a few becomes necessary.

### DADABHAI TO MALABARI

*October 5, 1888*

I am not much afraid of Sir Syed Ahmed's opposition. No doubt, Political Agents will be privately putting pressure upon the Chiefs to help them. But the cause is bad and must sooner or later collapse, unless our own friends turn traitors and a division among ourselves ruin the Congress....Upon the whole, the feeling here is in favour of it.... We shall now have a far more heavy struggle about the Services than we have had hitherto.

### DADABHAI TO WACHA

*November 16, 1888*

The opposition to the Congress is doing it incalculable good and will add much to its triumph and usefulness.... The (questions of the) Services and Representation they (leaders of the Congress) must stick to most earnestly. Both are immensely important, but the latter without the former will be a burden.

*November 25, 1888*

Work steadily on your side, take good care about the important subjects—the Services and simultaneous examinations.

*November 30, 1888*

We cannot afford to let this great question (Services) flag in the least. If the Congress achieve this one reform only, it will have conferred the greatest benefit on India.

*December 20, 1888*

At the Congress all leading men must meet. I wish Telang and Pheroze Shah to be there. I wonder why Kabraji and Bhowanagsee should be against the Congress....

*January 18, 1889*

This is a new epoch in the history of England and India—the exact bicentenary of the Revolution of 1688-89 to the very months November to February. If the Congress goes on discreetly, there is every chance of its complete success. But moderation is very much needed indeed.... Sir Lapel Griffin has attacked me in *The Times*. Sir R. Watkin has attacked the Congress as having Russian gold. Opposition and misrepresentation are thus progressing. Our moderation will overcome all.

*February 8, 1889*

Mr. Digby is arranging to see all prominent statesmen and I have no doubt his utterances will add to the strength of the Congress. Mr. Gladstone having once expressed himself so strongly and emphatically, we may look forward for better results.... Above all, therefore, we should never forget moderation and quiet but firm and steady work. We are still in the speaking stage. When that is carried on with discretion and temperateness, action and good result will soon follow in due natural course. We have to go through all the usual ailments of infancy and childhood. We have just got our two teeth out and may be able to digest more solid food.

*May 31, 1889*

Do not feel annoyed at Mr. Hume.... We must not forget what we owe him.... If he writes to me twice as angrily or unreasonably as he has written to you, I would simply say, "My dear friend, there is some misapprehension on your part", and in a kind way give him the facts. Trust him as one with whose scoldings we must put up as we would do of an elder brother or father. We cannot repay him adequately for what he has done and is doing for us.

## CHAPTER XV

### ACHIEVEMENTS IN PARLIAMENT

**N**O one expected that Dadabhai would take the House of Commons by storm. Even for tried British politicians it was not easy to distinguish themselves in the august Assembly. What hope was there for the Indian member to shine in that constellation of stars of exceptional brilliance? He hoped nevertheless that he would get a hearing, day after day, until he got Parliament to agree to at least a few measures of reform for which he had been agitating for over thirty years. Thanks to the courtesy of members of all parties, the encouragement of the Premier and old friends who were members of the House, and the goodwill of Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India, and his Deputy, George Russell, he moved about in the House as if he had been long used to its conventions and procedure and took an early opportunity to make his maiden speech during the debate on the Royal Address.

The House listened to the new member with keen interest. He stood before them, said he, in the name of India, to thank British rulers that they had made it possible for an Indian to stand before the House with the conviction that he would always find a large number of members ready to support him whenever he had any real grievance of India to bring forward. That modest speech was, however, followed by many an embarrassing question and argument. The Indian member invariably occupied over a page of the Order Book of the House with notices of motions, calling for detailed information and returns concerning the agricultural wealth of India and other matters pertaining to the country, necessitating a special staff to satisfy the curiosity of the Member for Central Finsbury!

The growing divergence in the value of gold and silver was then engaging the attention of the financiers of the



world. Despite the powerful advocacy of the bimetallists of the day to abandon or modify the gold standard, Britain and other Powers were against any fundamental change in their monetary system. Dadabhai, who had been expounding the problem in *The Times* and other journals for several years, repudiating all arguments in favour of bimetallism, made a valued contribution to the debate.

Several other debates followed on the question of currency and exchange. One of them centred round a proposal to compensate members of the Civil and Military Services of the Indian Government for the reduction of their salaries owing to the diminution of the value of the rupee. It was proposed that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the matter. The Viceroy had already expressed himself in favour of granting compensation to the officers concerned. Dadabhai was indignant that it should not have occurred to those in favour of payment of compensation to the officers that there was another side to the picture. What was the position of the people of India owing to the fall in exchange? There was not a word of sympathy for those whose pockets would be touched by whatever was demanded by way of compensation. Truly, he observed, the heaviest of all yokes was the yoke of an alien government.

Dadabhai then gave a harrowing picture of the abject poverty of India, citing his favourite authorities. From that question to the drain of India's wealth was the next logical step. "You ought to have some heart and some justice," he observed feelingly, "to consider from what source this money has to be made up." What was the use of a Committee? The Viceroy had made up his mind. "There has hardly been an instance," he boldly asserted, "in which a Commission has sat on such a matter as this and decided in a manner that can be called impartial and unbiased.... The whole thing is a foregone conclusion.... Do not put additional taxation on those poor people."

The Indian Currency Committee of 1893 overruled the proposal made by the Government of India for stop-

ping the free coinage of silver with a view to the introduction of the Gold Standard. So far its recommendations were in unison with the evidence given by Dadabhai before the Committee. It, however, suggested modifications of the Government proposals which left to the authorities the discretion to take steps, if and when necessary, to close the mints to the free mintage of silver accompanied by an announcement that, though closed to the public, they would be used by Government for the coinage of rupees in exchange for gold at a ratio to be then fixed, say 1s. 4d. per rupee.

Dadabhai had then a good deal to say against the gold exchange standard throughout the debates, in the press and at protest meetings. Since those days, the theories of political economy and political finance have undergone many modifications and qualifications, but most of the principles stressed and views expressed by Dadabhai hold good to this day. Although his opposition to the change from a silver to a gold standard would seem to have been ill-founded in the light of subsequent experience, the conception that in the long run a rise or fall in exchange is of no fundamental importance, inasmuch as ultimately commodities are exchanged against commodities, needed emphasis in Dadabhai's days, as it does even today. So also was it necessary to stress the difficulties of abandoning the silver standard and the cost involved, but his unmitigated opposition to the introduction of a gold standard appears today to have been misconceived. Time has muffled the sporadic outcries of the silver interests. The adoption of the gold exchange standard, it is now recognized, turned out to be an advantage to India. She was thereby linked up to the progressive group of gold standard countries and saved from being the dumping-ground of the white metal which was discarded by country after country. Such a contingency could not, however, have been anticipated by those who lived in the days of Dadabhai. Nor was it realized in his days, as it has come to be recognized only recently, that the word "drain" has

been one of the most heavily worked words in Indian economics.

To raise a debate on the question of the Civil Service Examination, Dadabhai tabled a Bill to provide that the first examination for appointment to the Civil Services in India should be held simultaneously in India and in the United Kingdom. As there was not the slightest chance of success, he arranged for a resolution to the same effect being tabled by Herbert Paul.

The chances of the ballot brought Paul the privilege of opening on June 2 a discussion on the question and moving his resolution. It was seconded by Dadabhai, supported by Wedderburn and, to the surprise of everyone, carried. It had caught Government members napping. Not anticipating defeat, they had not rallied their forces, whereas Dadabhai had called on members individually and impressed not a few with the reason and justice of the demand. It was the proudest moment in Dadabhai's career. All India rejoiced with him. It was, in fact, his victory, for though the resolution was moved by Paul, it was inspired by him, and the support it secured was almost entirely the result of his active lobbying. It was also India's victory—a victory of right over might, of justice over aggression.

The Resolution of the House was not binding on the Government of India. They nullified Dadabhai's victory by their guerilla warfare carried on for a long time. Meanwhile Dadabhai received an invitation from the Lahore Committee of the Congress to preside at the Congress session at Lahore. He accepted the invitation, little dreaming that his path homeward would be darkened by the news of the death of his only son. Amidst heaps of letters of condolence from all parts of the world, there was one from Malabari which struck the right note: *Remember, all India is your son.*

Dadabhai bore the loss with remarkable fortitude, attended his parliamentary duties and wrote to friends in India as before. It was not merely for India that he had toiled during that glorious year of his life. He had also

rendered signal service to his constituency generally and his electors individually. A member for a constituency has to do many things for it, besides watching its interests in the House. Central Finsbury was grateful to Dadabhai for all such things he had done for them. On the eve of his departure to India, the Council of the Liberal and Radical Association passed a resolution according to him their "heartly approval and thanks" for his persistent efforts in favour of popular rights and also for "his continuous attendance at the House of Commons during the session of unprecedented labour".

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The hero's home-coming was marked by unparalleled enthusiasm and rejoicing throughout India. His election to the highest Assembly in the British Empire and his triumph in getting the House of Commons to endorse his demand for holding simultaneously in England and India the first examination for the Civil Service meant victory of the people of India. Their joy on the occasion of his visit to his motherland and the sentiment of unity and solidarity thus awakened were reflected in the popular demonstrations in his honour.

The mail boat carrying Dadabhai was timed to reach Bombay harbour by midnight on December 2, 1893. The whole city was astir by daybreak. Numerous deputations representing various organizations from far-flung parts of the country in addition to thousands of the citizens of Bombay gathered with garlands in their hands at the Apollo Bunder which was decked with flags and buntings, to greet the Grand Old Man revered as Rishi (sage) of India.

The steamer was, however, behind schedule. The disappointed crowds made their way home but returned by 4 p.m. The welcome Dadabhai received on landing at the pier, dressed, in the Parsi style, in black coat and turban and red silk trousers, and all along the route until the procession arrived at his house, was one that even royalty had not received. The first to congratulate him was the Governor of Bombay. Two members of the

Governor's Council and the Chief Justice called on him. Numerous deputations then met him in the rooms of the Bombay Presidency Association. He told the audience that his trump card was always India, that it never failed to arouse interest and that he had been received in the House of Commons cordially and was supported even by members of the Conservative party.

Asked whether Lord Salisbury had not been discomfited by his presence in the House, the large-hearted man replied: 'NO'. He refrained from uttering a single word against the statesman whose ill-conditioned tongue had brought ridicule on himself, and merely recalled how he was cordially invited and received warmly everywhere.

On December 20, the President-elect of the Congress left Bombay for Lahore. At every station, whatever the hour of arrival of the train, midnight or dawn, crowds came forward with the usual floral tribute for the *darshan* of the Grand Old Man. The return journey from Lahore to Bombay evoked the same enthusiasm, demonstrating that even in a country notoriously divided by castes and creeds the unity of the people was not a dream.

On January 22, the Indian M.P. embarked for England. On arrival in London, the Chairman and members of the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association met him at the station and gave him a "good reception". Thus auspiciously begun, the year 1894 ended in another great triumph for Dadabhai in the House of Commons. It led to the fruition of his prolonged and strenuous agitation for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of Indian expenditure.

In the course of the Indian Budget debate, Samuel Smith moved a resolution demanding the inquiry. Having been associated with Dadabhai in the study of the question for nearly 40 years and having revisited India only a little while ago, Smith produced facts and figures to establish the impoverishment of the country. The abyss that swallowed up its resources was its military expenditure. Dadabhai seconded the motion. The Secretary of State for India



was not opposed to an inquiry. If the motion were withdrawn, he said, he himself would undertake, on the part of Government, to propose, at the commencement of the next session, the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the question. Smith accepted the suggestion.

Dadabhai then raised several issues regarding apportionment of various items of expenditure between England and India with a view to indicating that an unfair share of home charges was placed on the Indian exchequer. The Secretary of State was for once more helpful. It had been urged upon him, and he agreed, that an impartial Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into this question. On behalf of his colleagues in the Government and at the India Office and the Government of India, he assured the House that it was their desire not to injure India, not to bleed India, but to go on the career of progress that had characterized the rule of India by Great Britain.

By Royal Warrant, dated May 24, 1895, a Royal Commission was appointed, with Lord Welby as Chairman, to inquire into the administration and management of the military and civil expenditure incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council or of the Government of India and the apportionment of charges between the Government of the United Kingdom and India for purposes in which both were interested. Dadabhai was invited to join the Commission.

Close on the heels of the appointment of the Commission followed the dissolution of Parliament. At a meeting of the United Liberal and Radical Association, Dadabhai was adopted as a candidate for re-election from the Central Finsbury constituency. The chances of success for a Liberal candidate were very slender. The wave of reaction which submerged William Harcourt in Derby and John Morley in Newcastle was equally devastating in Dadabhai's case in Central Finsbury.

The loss of his seat in the House of Commons was a blessing in disguise. It set him free to concentrate all his

time and energy on the exceptionally exacting work he had chalked out for himself as a member of the Royal Commission. It was fortunate that although he was the only Indian member, there were on the Commission two British members as good, as friendly and as helpful as Indians, Wedderburn and Caine.

In the midst of the work of the Commission, the question of the Civil Service was not shelved. Dadabhai wanted to raise it as forming part of the inquiry itself. Simultaneously, he asked the Congress Committees and other political organizations in India to overwhelm the authorities with monster memorials on the subject. He then began writing a series of notes expounding the case for India. Altogether nine elaborate notes were submitted. The first indicated how India had been made to pay, from the beginning of Britain's connection with India, for all sorts of expenditure for the establishment and maintenance of the British rule. Britain had never contributed her fair share for the benefits derived from the expenditure from the revenues of India.

Some of the notes furnished tables of statistics concerning production and distribution and cited authorities to prove that one of the results of the prevailing system of administration was the grinding poverty of the people of British India, "suicidal to British name and rule and destructive and degrading to the people." With his ninth and final note he put forward another return showing expenditure on wars beyond the Indian frontiers.

These notes, however, are now of merely academic interest. So was the evidence tendered by Wacha, Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea and Subramania Aiyar on behalf of India.

Fearing that his notes might not be taken into consideration by the Commission in making its report, Dadabhai decided to appear before the Commission himself as a witness and subject himself voluntarily to the ordeal of cross examination so that the Commission might feel

compelled to deal with the issues raised in the course of his evidence.

There were several passages-at-arms between the Chairman and the witness.

The Chairman asked: "What is it that you want? Do you wish to sweep away the whole English scheme?"

"Yes, as it is," was Dadabhai's reply.

"I want to know whether you wish to get rid of it bodily?"

"There you misunderstand me."

"What proportion would you keep?"

"There is no proportion there. You must serve the double purpose both of maintaining the supremacy in a very remarkable and a very efficient manner and at the same time the people must feel that they are governed by themselves."

"I merely wish to ask you whether you propose to retain any part of Civil Service—the European Service?"

"Only the highest portion such as the Viceroy, the Governors, the Commander-in-Chief. Let us have the whole Civil Service, leaving alone the high level of the Europeans as the controlling power."

"Then you would have the Viceroy, etc.?"

"Certainly."

"No Englishmen beneath them?"

"I do not see any necessity for others."

"And by degrees you would evict them all?"

"We may go gradually higher up."

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"The history of India is that the people have been continually slaughtering each other?"

"What have you done here? What is the history of Europe? We do not want to go back, because we have learnt as you have learnt."

"Is your recipe for reviving the prosperity of India to let loose the Pindaris?"

"Not necessarily. Those days are gone . . ."

"Do you remember what Sir Madhava Rao, Prime Minister of Baroda, said to Lord Roberts on the subject of India for the Indians?"

"What did he say?"

"He said it would be like loosing the bars of the cages of the Zoological Gardens and letting out the animals, that very soon they would all be dead except the tiger—the tiger was, I believe, the warlike people of Northern India."

"Is this the result of 150 years of British rule that we are not civilized enough to observe law and order?"

On the whole it was a brilliant performance. The severity of the cross-examination gave Dadabhai the opportunity of driving home all his points, and incidentally, impressing his colleagues on the Commission with his grasp of the facts and figures bearing on the issues involved. It was not expected that the Commission's report would be unanimous. The majority of the members were not unsympathetic but they could not see eye to eye with the three champions of India who demanded much more than the majority were prepared to concede. There were therefore two reports—a majority report and a minority report. Into the points of conflict between the minority and majority report it is not necessary to enter as they have now lost their significance. Indeed, even before the declaration of India's independence the financial situation of the country had undergone many modifications. Such as it was, the majority report had taken cognizance of the iniquities against which India had to contend. Dadabhai's labours in connection with the inquiry were not, therefore, thrown away.

An important domestic occurrence of the period was the wedding of Dadabhai's second daughter. She insisted that her father should be present to give her away. He pleaded inability to leave England, as the work of the Commission demanded all his time and attention. She, no less dogged than her father in her resolutions, put off the event *sine die*! At last came from her "ever loving father" a pressing appeal (November 5, 1896) which made Dr. Maki

Dadabhai Naoroji relent and consent to become Mrs. H. M. Dadina :

Nothing can delight me more than to be present at your wedding. But I am helpless. I have undertaken a duty which, I have no doubt you will agree with me, I *must* perform. This is nearly the last work of my life, and its fruition as far as it can go. Unless you wish me to throw away the whole work of my life, it is impossible for me to stir..... The manner in which the people received me and for which we all were so glad shows what I owe to them..... No, dear, give up the idea of my presence. As it is not quite certain that I can go in the winter of 1897, it is useless, my dear child, to wait.

Another letter of the period to "Dears All" (July 2, 1897) throws a sidelight on the state of Indian womanhood even after fifty years of progress in female education :

I had no idea that the bicycle was for Maki. I do not know whether she would like to ride in Bombay or whether people would like to see her ride, or whether any good number of Parsi ladies are riding at present. Considering the profession she is to follow, it would perhaps not be desirable for her to create any prejudice against herself at present.



## CHAPTER XVI

### CRUSADE AGAINST THE OPIUM AND LIQUOR TRADE

**D**ADABHAI'S crusade against the abhorrent opium and liquor traffic forms one of the most luminous chapters in the story of his manifold activities. As a lad he had felt humiliated at being at a liquor shop. As a businessman he had informed his partners that he would not touch the profits derived from the firm's business in opium and wines and spirits. Studying the problem in all its aspects, he came to the conclusion that Indians were not a people addicted to drink. In fact, the religion of most of them prohibited the use of intoxicating liquor. All that was needed was to prevent wines and spirits going to India, but while giving India Western civilization, the British Government had introduced in that country, which was by religion and habit abstinent, Western institutions and the excise system, and with it, the liquor shop. Almost all the distilleries in India belonged to Government. They let out liquor shops by public auction to the highest bidder who undertook to sell the largest number of gallons of liquor.

In the course of his correspondence with Lord Hartington, Secretary of State for India, Dadabhai urged, in a memorandum (November 10, 1880) on the condition of India, that the opium trade was an instance of the demoralization of the British Government itself. The civilized, humane and Christian British nation, he said, was forcing a "heathen and barbarous" power (China) to take what could be sold in England by chemists alone for medicinal purposes, tempting a vast human race to indulge in it and be demoralized. The opium trade was a sin on England's head and a curse to India for her share in being the instrument of such traffic.

In the year 1886, several M.P.s and other citizens were waging a war on opium. Dadabhai plunged himself into the contest. The Secretary to the India and China League called on him to seek his co-operation in a concerted attack on the policy of Government. The practical measures proposed comprised, besides withdrawal from the opium trade, Indian financial reform and participation by Indians in the administration of India.

In 1888, another organization was formed, called the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, with its office at Broadway Chambers, Westminster. Being a missionary movement, it appealed to the great heart of England and called all true Christians to a holy war.

How did Britain come to be responsible for the evil? In several parts of the Indian Empire, Government had a monopoly in the growth, manufacture and sale of opium. They licensed every poppy plant that was grown, subsidized the cultivator, bought the crop at a fixed price and manufactured the drug expressly for the Chinese market, sold it by auction at Calcutta and pocketed the profits. Public sentiment revolted against such a traffic, but Government pleaded their inability to do without the opium revenue and their apologists refused to admit that opium, taken in moderation, had any deleterious effect.

The Christian missionaries, who were unhappy eye-witnesses of the dire distress, disease and degradation directly attributable to the policy pursued by Government in this matter, were very bitter in their complaints to their friends in England. One of them burst out in indignation :

Bishop Heber sweetly sang  
Waft, waft, ye winds, His story  
And you, ye waters, roll  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.  
But in the very deed we are saying  
Waft, waft, ye winds, the opium  
Prepared in England's name,  
To bring us golden millions,  
What'ever may be the shame.

The crusaders won a partial victory on the floor of the House on April 10, 1891. A resolution was passed to the effect that the system by which opium revenue was raised in India was morally indefensible and that Government should cease to grant licences for the cultivation of the poppy and sale of opium in British India, except to supply the legitimate demand for medicinal purposes. It was also resolved that the Government of India should at the same time take measures to arrest the transit through British territory of opium cultivated in Indian States.

Although the progress made was not unsatisfactory, Dadabhai was sick at heart that the real grievance of India was lost sight of by the leaders of the anti-opium party. He got an opportunity to unburden his mind on the subject when Joseph Alexander, Secretary to the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, asked him (October 31, 1892) to join a deputation appointed to present a memorial to the Secretary of State. The Society, he pointed out, unfortunately did not realize the real source of the disease and of all other woes of India. They did not appear to have ever asked why India was so poor as not to be able to pay for her own wants and why she must depend upon poisoning the people of another country or why she must depend upon the charity of the English people or upon further taxation.

When the opium question was again raised in June 1903 in the House of Commons, Dadabhai took the same line of argument. While maintaining that the opium traffic was a curse both for England and India, he pointed out that it touched merely the fringe of the problem of Indian administration under the system then prevailing. A lucid exposition of the case was given by Gladstone who, speaking on behalf of Government, yet had the candour to admit that it happened not infrequently in human affairs that those who ought, from their position, to know the most and the best, yet from prejudice and prepossession knew the least and the worst. While, therefore, he refrained from supporting the viewpoint of the authorities

on the spot and was prepared to refer the matter to a Commission for enquiry, he took the opportunity of explaining that Government had ceased forcing the trade upon China. They had left the matter to China herself except that the opium which they allowed to be exported and from which they derived a large revenue was sent to that country to be received, if she chose to receive it. The Commission that was appointed made its report in 1895. It did not satisfy the anti-opium party. There was further agitation and another battle, with Dadabhai as one of the soldiers in the fight. A debate was raised in Parliament, but the dissolution of the House on July 8 put an end to Dadabhai's activities in that direction.

Drink was another evil which Dadabhai wished to see eradicated during his lifetime. His friends and colleagues in politics, Caine and Samuel Smith, were ardent champions of the temperance movement in England. During his visit to Bombay in 1888 Caine called a conference of representative Indians at which a desire was expressed that an organization with branches in India should be set up in Great Britain. The Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was inaugurated accordingly, with Smith as President. From its inception, Dadabhai was one of its active members. The co-operation of the National Temperance Association of Great Britain was secured. A wave of enthusiasm for temperance then swept over India; branch committees were formed in principal cities and a network of Temperance Societies was established throughout the country.

The Association got a resolution carried in the House of Commons (April 1889) asking for the introduction of drastic reforms in the Excise administration. The moral evil of the consumption of liquor was apparent in the harvest of crime, destitution, degradation, disease and death. Its economic evil, however, was not so readily realized. Dadabhai pointed it out by facts and figures in an address to one of the Temperance Lodges (April 8, 1891). The drink bill of the English nation then amounted

to about £130,000,000. "Now," he said, "if so much money were simply thrown away into the sea, it will be but a small evil. But the evil is doubled and multiplied. So much material, the gift of nature and labour, fit for the food of man, is converted into so much not only un-nourishing but destructive material. . . . ."

A few figures could speak more eloquently than a volume of words. "I take the total cost of drink," he said, "to be about £130,000,000. This means that about the same amount would have supplied the whole people of the United Kingdom all the year round with all the bread (£70,000,000), butter and cheese (£35,000,000) and milk (£30,000,000), or the same amount would have supplied all the people all the year round the whole house rent (£70,000,000) and all the woollen and cotton and linen goods (£66,000,000). Fancy all this good not only not obtained, but on the contrary evil to that amount inflicted upon the people and, thereby, the power of reproducing all that wealth more or less destroyed. But worst of all there is general deterioration of the nation and the diminution of the average length of human life."

The Association favoured the policy of local option and the veto. It urged that wherever a good majority of the people desired to get rid of the evil, they should have the right to apply the democratic principle that the good of the people at large and not the indulgence of a few should decide the condition of a community.

In pursuance of a resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Association, a considerable number of Indians resident in London, mostly students, met at Westminster Town Hall to inaugurate an "Indian Brotherhood of Total Abstiners". Samuel Smith presided and blessed the movement. He believed, with Dadabhai, that one of the most hopeful and effective ways of grappling with the drink evil was to make the rising generation detest it and regard it as its duty and life's purpose to



destroy it. The Indian Brotherhood was formally inaugurated and Dadabhai was elected President.

The Brotherhood does not appear to have promoted the cause of abstainers to any appreciable extent. But a floating population of students could hardly have been expected to achieve much in that direction. Dadabhai was content to see young Indian students interested in the temperance movement and carrying with them to India a sense of abhorrence of the drink habit.

## CHAPTER XVII

### UNTIRING PROPAGANDA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

**D**ADABHAI was determined that the last days of his life should be dedicated to a more intensive campaign than before throughout the United Kingdom, demanding for India British rule on British principles. A vigorous campaign was planned accordingly. Several letters of the period indicate in what fighting form he was to carry on the campaign. To J. N. Tata he wrote on May 27, 1897 : "Nothing can be accomplished without perseverance and doggedness. Because the Government has resisted it (the proposal for simultaneous examinations), there was the greater necessity to fight out the matter with greater and more energetic persistence and noise..... Because Government will not grant, therefore give up, is not the policy which will get anything for us." Similarly in a letter to Prithivi Chandra Raj, he wrote on October 29 : "We have to do much pioneering work. We cannot expect fruit at once.... It will be absurd to shirk now." In another letter to G. Subramania Aiyar (September 4), he said : "Keep up, as you say, the spirit of the people—do not be cowed down. That's the only way to deal with Englishmen."

Bubonic plague broke out in Bombay in 1896 and spread throughout India during the following year. To the chronic disease of poverty and periodic tragedy of famine was thus added another dire calamity. Oppressed by the thought of these misfortunes, Dadabhai came to attribute them to the drain of India's resources. 1897 was the year of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. In writing to her on the auspicious occasion, he could not help striking a jarring note and telling her that the consequences of the violation of pledges given by her and

embodied in various Acts and Proclamations were the impoverishment of the people and the infliction of the scourges of war, pestilence and famine.

To James Gordon Bennet, proprietor of the *New York Herald*, he wrote (February 18) :

I feel much puzzled that while so much sympathy has been aroused about the perishing millions of my poor countrymen in India, your paper, so foremost in humane work, has not opened a subscription in the United States.

Prince Ranjitsinhji of Jamnagar, who had made a name for himself on the cricket field of England, was then busy arousing sympathy for the suffering people of India. To him Dadabhai addressed the following words of advice (March 4) :

You have to distinguish the appeal for the relief of the present calamity from the necessity of preventing such calamities in the future, and if you can in some way impress upon your hearers their great duty to see that this is looked into, you will do a service both to England and to India. You will also be able to impress upon them that during the last fifteen years since the last great famine, this country has added to its wealth from India four or five hundred millions sterling and that from that great abundance England is bound to give in abundance. Even one per cent will mean four or five millions. . . . . There are people who do not, and cannot, come to relief works—women, children, old and infirm, and more pitiful still, the respectable who would on no account seek relief and would prefer to starve and die—here private charity is most needed.

A countrywide campaign was launched in the same year, taking advantage of the presence of Wacha, Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea and Subramania Aiyar in England. Dadabhai was also one of the prominent speakers. The campaign culminated in a resolution passed on December 28, at Montagu Mansions, London, affirming that the main cause of India's misery was the unrighteous and un-British system of government which bled the country and was maintained by political hypocrisy and subterfuges, entirely in contravention of the wishes of the British people. The resolution demanded that a large portion, if not the whole, of the expenditure in respect of famine and plague and the whole cost of the Frontier war should be met from the British exchequer.

About this time it caused some uneasiness to Dadabhai's friends in India that in his crusade he was seeking the help of socialists. The *Hindu Patriot* sounded a warning against what it considered a dangerous policy. Dadabhai in reply stressed the importance and value of the assistance of the socialists, thanks to Hyndman's lead. While, however, he welcomed the whole-hearted support of his ever helpful socialist friend, he stoutly rejected his persistent advice to abandon what Hyndman ridiculed as India's policy of spineless agitation. It was time to be up and stirring. How to create a stir? Dadabhai was not in favour of encouraging a rebellion. On the contrary, he was anxious to prevent it and to see the British connection with India rendered a blessing to both countries. His letter to Hyndman gives us an idea of the fundamental difference of opinion between them :

With reference to my visit to you, I have carefully considered the matter again and I remain of the same view as I then expressed to you that after reading your article in *Justice* I cannot any more work with you and the S. D. F. on Indian matters. My desire and aim has been not to encourage rebellion but to prevent it and to make the British connection with India a benefit and blessing to both countries, which it can certainly be, but which unfortunately has not been the case to India, owing to an evil and unrighteous system of government being persisted in by the executive authorities, in spite of the wishes of the sovereign, the people and the Parliament of this country to govern righteously.

A letter to Motilal Ghose (July 23) also makes Dadabhai's position clear :

I, of course, cannot join him (Hyndman) on the line that India may rebel..... Our stand is confidence in the British people, to persistently but constitutionally agitate till we inform the British public of the evils of the present system of government and get it reformed on righteous lines. They take a view of the British rule and express it which I cannot prevent. But whatever view they take or express, one thing is clear : that their motive, as they say, is the good of India and England, their own country, which Mr. Hyndman considers as identical.

Hyndman did not press his views any more for a while, but he reverted to the charge early in the following year :

What do you judicious people gain (he asked, February 19) by your moderation? What does your journal *India* gain by its dullness that can be felt? To the naked eye, and even to the microscope, nothing! They just kick you and pass sedition acts over you, and lie about you, even more than they do with us. We, at least, have the satisfaction of chasing them, deriding them, making them look ridiculous, and driving them into furious anger. Moreover, we are getting ready for the inevitable crash which is coming—not in India alone. Suave, moderate gentlemen don't get much attention when 'the band begins to play', so they might at least be heard now—but they aren't.

Dadabhai, however, wrote in reply (February 22) :

All that you say is true, but Indians cannot do yet what you say. You should realize their position in every respect.... India represents Indians, not Englishmen, and India can only speak as Indians should.... The Government are now openly taking up a Russian attitude, and we are helpless. The mass of the people yet do not understand the position. John Bull does not understand the bark. He only understands the bite, and we cannot do this.

In November 1898, Dadabhai went campaigning in Lancashire as much harm had been done to India in the interests of the trade of that manufacturing area. He wished to make the Lancashire public realise what could really promote the cotton trade between England and India. "Are you aware," he asked in one of his speeches, "that the drain of wealth from India acts as protection to Indian industry? It is a well-known economic law that a tribute not only takes from the tributary nation the amount paid, but also raises against them the price of foreign goods?"

Wherever they went, the champions of Indian reform were hailed with delight. John Bright had stressed the fact that there were only two ways in which Britain could get good out of India—plunder and trade. The British people, Dadabhai asserted, would prefer trade. But what profits could Britain reap from a poverty-stricken people? The argument went home to the business men present at the meetings.

The annual dinner of the London Indian Society was held on November 1, 1898. In proposing the toast to the Empress and the Royal Family, Dadabhai said: "While



expressing our attachment to the Queen, we cannot help feeling that her noble proclamations for the welfare of her Indian people have been interpreted by her Ministers in exactly the opposite light to that in which we view them."

"We still believe," he added, "that the British people have a conscience. We look to them for justice, and I hope the time will come, although I may not have the good fortune to live to see it, when all things will be changed and Her Majesty's best wishes realized."

In proposing the toast of India and the Indian National Congress, Professor A. F. Murison said :

Sir W. Hunter was not regarded as a feather-headed man, even by *The Times*, and yet he had declared his belief that the general programme of the Congress would actually reach accomplishment by the end of the century. As the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, so the vituperation of officialism and the lackeys of officialism contributed to the impulse of the Congress movement.

Dr. Sarat Mullick ventured to dip into the future and to assert that the time would come when the President of the Indian National Congress would be consulted by the Governor-General and an Indian himself would hold the high and important position of Governor-General.

While carrying on this agitation, Dadabhai earnestly believed that he was fighting not merely in the interests of poor India but also in the interests of the British Empire. "Injustice will bring the mightiest on earth to ruin"—the slogan for which he was indebted to Lord Salisbury—were not mere empty words. Those words, he apprehended, spelt the Nemesis of the British Empire, and he was never weary of warning British friends of the danger inherent in the policy pursued by their countrymen in India. It was the same feeling of apprehension that made him write to George Freeman (February 11, 1898) :

Really the prospect for the British Empire does not look very bright, if the present infatuation for keeping other nationalities under heel is persisted in. It is the most effectual way in which they are digging their own grave. At present in India they are going from bad to worse and wiping off whatever merit there was in the British name by Russianizing the

system of repressing freedom of speech and the liberty of the subject.

Writing to the same friend, six months later (August 25), about the growing sea power of England, to which Freeman had referred, Dadabhai pointed out that when Asia would be connected with Europe by railways, such power would not be of much avail.

England's only strength (he added), if she is wise enough to see it, against all Europe, is in the contentment, prosperity, and desire of India herself to keep up England's connexion. England can then command a resource of strength that can defy all Europe..... India is England's greatest strength and its greatest weakness, as she would have it.

Once more, while writing to this friend, he sounded a warning (November 24) :

I am afraid the race question will become in time a burning one. The backward races in other parts of the world seem destined to have a bad time. The European greed will be too much for them. But the Indian question will be a terrible matter for England, if she does not look out. Once India is fully roused, and in these days of rapid development of political and moral forces this may come much sooner than we can expect, it will be impossible for England to hold her own firmly.

During the year 1900, India was groaning under one of her worst famines. Charles Mallet gave an address on "The Indian Famine", with Gladstone in the chair. There were meetings all over the country. India had been loyal to the Crown, but, said Dadabhai at one of the meetings, "do not expect that that loyalty cannot fail." That was not an empty threat. India at the end of the century was not the India of 1852 when he had made his first political speech and spoken of her loyalty. There was grave unrest in that country and the authorities were actually anticipating trouble. In fact, what he had advocated years and years ago and was still advocating was gaining acceptance and Dadabhai was glad to see young Indians coming forward to work on behalf of their motherland. "Go doggedly forward," said he at a reception given to him with the special object of affording Indian youths interested in the coming struggle an opportunity to meet Dadabhai. "Learn a lesson from John Bull himself" !

Dadabhai had robust faith in the youth of India. While his colleagues in India were getting impatient of what appeared to be extremist views and rebellious attitude of young Indians in some places, he wanted more and more of them to come forward and hold aloft the torch of freedom. The time had come to organize the activities of youth devoted to the cause of the motherland. Missionaries were wanted everywhere to serve India and to propagate the gospel of freedom. This idea was put forward in concrete form to Gokhale a little later :

Each province should furnish a band of young, well-educated men to become the missionaries of this work and to devote themselves under suitable organization to do it. Side by side with the work to be done in India there must be vigorous propaganda in England. We cannot accomplish our object by working only in India or only in England. They are two halves and by their combination only can the whole work be done.... The tide is with us. The English people and press are beginning to understand the wrongs of India. Asia is waking up. The Isles of the East are becoming the Isles of the West and we may fairly expect that our emancipation is not far off. My one word is—never despair.

A notable manifesto was issued over the signatures of Wedderburn, Hume and Dadabhai on October 19, 1900, addressed to the President-designate of the Congress at Lahore. It passed under review fifteen years of Congress work and marked a new stage in the history of that organization. It was a critical stage—a parting of the ways. Whether the constitutional movement should develop into its full usefulness, by drawing together the rulers and the ruled and by promoting the welfare of both India and England, or whether the efforts that had been made should end in disappointment and reaction would depend, said the illustrious trio, upon the attitude and action of the Indian people. "We who were among its originators," they observed, "have now well-nigh completed our work as pioneers; we have given the lead to the younger men and must look to them to take up in larger measure the burden of the work."

The Congress had tried to remove the tendency to underground discontent and secret conspiracy, which was a

danger necessarily attending an administration conducted by foreigners on autocratic lines. The official attitude towards the organization was, however, one of disapproval and suspicion. Despite all obstacles the Congress had accomplished its object of obtaining solidarity of public opinion. It held the field as a national representative assembly. However vehemently it might have been assailed in the earlier years, the Congress views on questions affecting India such as the forward policy beyond the North-Western Frontier, the plague regulations, the famine grant and the financial relations of England and India, had prevailed. The Royal Commission had unanimously found the charges placed upon India to be unfair to the extent of a quarter of a million sterling per annum. Accepting the finding, Government had conceded to India a small measure of financial justice.

It was the old, old story of the shield—silver on one side and gold on the other. Much work remained to be done to present both the sides to all concerned. India was lying prostrate from accumulated misfortunes. All available forces had to be brought together in order to raise her up and lead her again into paths of prosperity. The first step in that direction was to ascertain, by searching inquiry, the causes of her downfall and to devise remedies suited to her peculiar economic condition. The work in England was great and difficult; the workers were few and were overtaxed both as to physical endurance and financial resources. That was why Wedderburn was driven to retire from Parliament to economize his resources for direct work on behalf of India. The times were critical. By hard, earnest work and united purpose, the Congress might constitute itself a valued adviser to the Government of India and an influence in England tending to strengthen the Empire. On the other hand, if the necessary sacrifice and self-denial were not exercised, if the constitutional effort were allowed to lapse from want of courage and constancy, the work of years would be thrown away and a danger would arise that the physical sufferings of the

masses might lead to counsels of despair. "Against such a conclusion," declared the three stalwarts, "we, who have given our best years to the service of India, will, to the last, use our best efforts in the interests alike of India and England."

On the first day of the first year of the twentieth century the Commonwealth of Australian Colonies was inaugurated. It was an event of vast importance to the British Empire; to Dadabhai, as an Indian, it afforded food for reflection. Why was it that a very small part of the British Empire, with a population of less than five millions, had been progressing during the first century by leaps and bounds until it had become one of the most flourishing portions of the earth, while the great Empire of India, which had been connected with the British nation more or less for two hundred years, and which had been controlled by most highly paid administrators, was in a most disastrous condition and was reduced to the state of the poorest country in the civilized world?

Thanks to the lesson which the United States had taught England, when they gained independence, the British Colonies had since been treated justly and righteously. Similar treatment had not, however, been meted out to India. The declaration of policy had been as good as could be desired. But the principles laid down in the Proclamations were violated and disregarded. There had been bleeding instead of nourishing, and British helotry had been substituted for British citizenship. Dadabhai unburdened his mind on that depressing topic at a lecture he gave on India on January 14, 1901, at the Penge and Beckenham Liberal and Radical Club. He had no desire to dwell on the past; he preferred rather to look forward. Would the new century bring a favourable change in policy which would be productive of good results for both England and India? Once more he appealed to the British authorities to pursue a righteous policy.

On January 31, Dadabhai delivered another address on the 'Condition of India' at Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel,



which was followed by several more on Indian famines and their causes. On March 22 the Castle Street Congregational Chapel was packed to overflowing when the Castle Street Pleasant Hour Society and the Broad Street P.S.A. assembled to hear Dadabhai on the question of "the relations of England and India." Dadabhai had then a busy week at Reading. How active he was, despite his 77 years, is shown in the following extract from a letter from Gideon Ashdown (March 1) in the *Reading Standard* :

He rose at 7 a.m. Sunday (February 17) and at 9.30 addressed the Church of St. Adult School for 45 minutes; and afterwards was driven by Dr. Hurry to the Abbey Ruins where Mr. Naoroji was treated by the doctor with twenty minutes' interesting description. He indulged in a little rest and after luncheon went to Castle Street at 3 p.m. and addressed upwards of a thousand people, who listened with rapt attention for 50 minutes while the famous Indian orator unsparingly criticized their government of India, showing how they had failed in their duty. He then partook of tea and, as an aid to digestion, proceeded to Bridge Street Assembly Rooms and addressed an enthusiastic body of men and women on education, occupying one hour in speech and answering questions.

The platform campaign was extended even to the pulpit. Thanks to the courtesy of the Rev. Page Hopps, Pastor of the Free Church, Croydon, who lent his pulpit, Dadabhai gave to a sympathetic audience a harrowing picture of the condition of India. "Do not believe me as gospel," he said, "study for yourselves."

To protest against a proposal to tax the people of India for maintaining a garrison of British troops in South Africa, a public meeting was convened jointly by the British Committee of the Congress and the London Indian Society at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on July 30, 1901. Dadabhai moved the principal resolution which was seconded by Lord Welby, an impartial spokesman on behalf of India, who declared that the claim put forward by the British Government that India should contribute towards the expenses of maintaining the garrison in South Africa was unprecedented, unjust and unwise.

Out of the amount raised in Bombay in the year 1869 for a testimonial to Dadabhai, a small amount had been set apart for his portrait. This amount lay with the secretaries for years and the matter escaped attention. On the death of the last secretary, however, it was discovered that the amount with interest had increased to Rs. 8,000. With the sanction of the Bombay High Court this sum was handed over to three new secretaries to give effect to the resolution of the subscribers.

Before an enthusiastic audience, the portrait was unveiled on November 24, 1900, by Mahadeo Govind Ranade, who was then a judge of the High Court. He described Dadabhai as the best product of British education. In learning and industry, especially in industry, he believed, Dadabhai had no equal. "Englishmen," said he, "should feel proud of Dadabhai as a unique figure in Indian history." The era of British conquest was followed by that of consolidation. Then came the era of reconciliation and reconstruction. On what lines was the work of reconstruction to be carried on by the younger generation? These were laid down in Dadabhai's own words. The people of India should regard the existence and continuance of British dominion in that part of Asia as an unquestionable fact. That was the very foundation, said Ranade, of the whole edifice. But there was another aspect of the problem—"by reason of the conquest and of the consolidation the people of India should be raised to a place of equality among the other nations of the earth."

It might be said, added Ranade, that in the work of reconciliation, Dadabhai's "extreme position" had not been so helpful and so serviceable to the cause of India as they might have expected. But anyone who had studied Dadabhai's writings and speeches would say that such a calumny as that would never lessen the affection and esteem in which the people held him. In his writings as well as in his speeches there was not a single sentence or expression, even the most casual, which could be

pointed out in support of the allegation that he had created a gulf which did not exist before.

This was the last public function performed by Ranade before death prematurely laid low that intellectual giant of India. Dadabhai sent from England a letter of condolence to Mrs. Ranade through Gokhale. Her reply (February 22, 1901), indicates the feeling of reverential regard in which Dadabhai was held by the great Maharashtra of his day.

She knows—what everyone who stood close to Mr. Ranade knew well—that the high example set by you of single-minded devotion to the country's cause had exercised a large influence on Mr. Ranade's mind, and throughout his life he used to speak of you in terms which a pupil in India uses in speaking of a teacher.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SELF-GOVERNMENT THE ONLY REMEDY

**T**HE second most deadly weapon in the world is the hydrogen bomb; the first is the human tongue. The wounds inflicted by it are often worse than those of the second. This fact was unfortunately overlooked by so sagacious a statesman as Lord Curzon at the turn of the century. A new life was then stirring among the people of India. Recalling her glorious past and swayed by a very strong sense of nationalism, the educated classes were looking forward to seeing their motherland regain the place she occupied in ancient times amongst the nations of the world. At that psychological moment Curzon unwittingly wounded their feelings by some of his observations in his University Convocation address. "We have hardly learnt to light the lamp of the soul," he said. "We have to save the rising generation from walking in false paths and to guide them into right ones." He was addressing the audience not as the Head of the Government but as one of them, in his capacity as Chancellor of the University of Calcutta for the year 1904. It is not unusual for Chancellors of Universities to stress the importance of character, as he did, but at that tense moment the speech incensed the people who rose as one man to protest against what they regarded as a libel. The critics of Government took the opportunity they wanted for the condemnation of a viceroyalty distinguished, during the earlier years at least, for remarkable sympathy, justice, sagacity and statesmanship.

As the father of Indian Nationalism, Dadabhai rejoiced to find the national spirit of his countrymen thus stirred to its depths. The seeds he had scattered broadcast were thus bearing fruit. A new India was rising to view. Their complaint, however, he said, was not against individuals.

They were fighting against an unjust system. He exhorted the youth of the country to go to the root of the matter and to demand immediate improvement in the system of administration. "Misrule in India" was the subject of his lecture on March 18, 1904, before the members of the Penge and Beckenham Co-operative Society. The demand for self-government followed. At a gathering of the London Indian Society, responding to the toast of "The President", he declared: "There is only one remedy to the present dishonourable, hypocritical and destructive system. That remedy is self-government under British paramountcy."

Dadabhai then gave a shock to his friends and supporters and created a stir in India by attending an international gathering of Socialists at Amsterdam from August 20, 1904. After having addressed persons belonging to all classes of society in England, he had come to believe that it was the working class that could help India considerably, and that the people of India should win the daily growing labour force to their side. Apart from that consideration, his innate sympathy with labour had attracted him to the working classes and led him to identify himself with movements to ensure social justice. Testimony of such sympathy comes in a letter to Mr. R. Masani (February 19, 1929) from George Lansbury :

He was foremost in his championship of Home Rule for Ireland and for the great measures of social reform which at that time the Radical party was putting forward. I am quite sure that had he been younger and was now living in this country, he would have been one of the foremost men in the Labour Party. I hope one of these days we shall find another such as he standing for Parliament and standing on the broad basis of international Socialism.

A striking proof of his Socialistic tendencies was given by Dadabhai when at a Conference of Democrats, held on July 29, 1905, under the auspices of the Metropolitan Radical Federation and the National Democratic League at Holborn Town Hall, he moved, as Vice-President of the League, a resolution demanding the establishment of a universal system of old age pensions, based entirely upon



citizen rights and free from the taint of pauperism. He was, besides, one of the few politicians in England who had mastered the subject of British industrialism. Under the title of *The Rights of Labour* he had formulated and published a scheme for the establishment of Industrial Commissioners' Courts and for the recognition and protection of labour as a property. If legalized, it would have ensured justice to all wage-earners and perpetual industrial peace.

At the International Socialist Congress Dadabhai was received as an honoured guest representing the people of British India. At one of the sittings the question of India was introduced by a British delegate. The resolution condemning the system of British rule in India, moved by him, had the familiar ring of the numerous resolutions passed at meetings held under Dadabhai's lead in the United Kingdom. It called upon the workers of Great Britain to enforce upon their Government the abandonment of the "dishonourable" system of administration and the withdrawal of British control.

At that stage the President, Van Kol, a member of the Dutch Parliament, introduced Dadabhai to the assembly. In calling upon him to address the meeting, he asked the audience to rise and stand in silence to mark their respect and commiseration for the suffering millions of India. His words were the signal for one of the most inspiring manifestations of fellow-feeling. As Dadabhai walked slowly to the centre of the platform, he had a rousing reception. The delegates, about a thousand, leapt to their feet and stood uncovered before him in solemn silence. Then their thoughts turned from the Indian people to the dignified presence of their representative himself, and they gave him a tremendous ovation. It was a most impressive spectacle—the exploited and downtrodden working men and women of Europe expressing their goodwill and extending their hand of fellowship to the suffering millions of India.

So overpowered was Dadabhai by feelings of gratitude that when he spoke his voice trembled a little, but as he proceeded to lay the case for India before the delegates, it rang clear and resonant from one end of the concert-hall to the other. Most of them did not, before translation, understand a word of what he said, but his delicate features, his refined face, his white hair, and his dignified figure impressed them immensely. The delegates who understood English punctuated his speech with applause, but when the speech was translated into German and French, the Continental delegates were even more emphatic in their demonstrations of agreement and approval of the downright and incisive presentation of the case of the afflicted millions on whose behalf he was speaking. They had no idea that an Indian could be so cultured and so captivating as the venerable man who stood before them.

The resolution condemning the system of British rule in India was carried without opposition. "That means," observed the President, "that this Congress brands Great Britain with the mark of shame for the treatment of India."

Reports of the proceedings of the Socialist Congress were read by people all over the world. Dadabhai had the satisfaction that his appeal on behalf of his motherland attracted considerable attention in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, his association with the Socialists and his impeachment of the British rule roused the ire of the Anglo-Indian press in India. Dadabhai was, no doubt, being driven gradually to extremism, at least in his public utterances. Year after year his criticism of the defects of British rule in India increased in acerbity, the result of dire disappointment.

Lord Curzon became more and more unpopular. The division of the historic province of Bengal into two separate provinces with separate capitals antagonized the population. A protest meeting of Indians resident in the United Kingdom was held in London. Dadabhai presided and gave a stirring address, more thrilling and inspiring

than any he had ever delivered. "Indians," he said, "have unanimously, earnestly and emphatically declared that the system of rule they are now under should not continue to be."

Asking the audience to consider what that meant, he related what British statesmen had for more than fifty years stated concerning their faulty system of government and recalled the warnings sounded by them from time to time to the effect that the continuance of the old system would impel the people to rebel. "More than fifty years ago Mountstuart Elphinstone said: 'It is in vain to endeavour to rule them (Indians) on principles only suited to a slavish and ignorant population.' And we find not only a continuance of the same old system, but we find it brought to bear on the people with even more energy and more vigour. . . . . Now the Indian people have, for the first time, risen and declared that this thing shall not be. Here is a clear issue between the rulers and the people. They are come face to face. The rulers say, 'We shall rule, but only as foreign invaders with the result of draining the country of its wealth, and killing millions by famines and plague, and starving scores of millions by poverty and destitution,' while the ruled are saying for the first time, 'That shall not be.' I regard the day on which the first Calcutta meeting was held as a red-letter day in the annals of India. I am thankful that I have lived to see the birthday of the freedom of the Indian people."

What would be the consequences? Instead of giving his own views, Dadabhai quoted eminent authorities. John Malcolm had prophesied that "the evil" carried with it the seeds of destruction of the Empire. Thomas Munro had said that it would have been more desirable that they should have been expelled from India altogether than that the result of their system of government should be an abasement of a whole people. John Bright had warned his countrymen: "If there be a judgment of nations, as I believe there is as for individuals, our children, in no distant generations, must pay the penalty which we have

purchased by neglecting our duty to the populations of India." William Hunter had summed up the gist of one of his lectures in the words: "We should have had an Indian Ireland multiplied fifty-fold on our hands." Lord Hartington had pointed out that the only consequence of exclusion of Indians from the government of their own country could be to make them "desirous of getting rid, in the first instance, of their European rulers."

There was no need, continued Dadabhai, for him to refute what Lord Curzon had said in a spirit of peevishness against the character and religion of the East. He had performed that task before. He rather preferred to give illustrations of the political hypocrisy of British statesmen and administrators and to remind them that they were living in glass houses and should not indulge in the pastime of throwing stones. On one aspect of Lord Curzon's conduct he had, however, something to say.

He does not seem to realize (said Dadabhai) the responsibility of the position in which he had been placed. He is there representing the sovereign of the Empire—as Viceroy or second King—the head of a great people, three hundred millions in number, who had possessed civilization for thousands of years and at a time when his forefathers were wandering in the forests here.... His duty as Viceroy is to attract as much as possible and to attach the good feeling of the Indian people to the rule of the British sovereign. What does he do? By this act, he deals a deadly blow to British rule and then by a peculiarly ignorant and petulant speech he creates almost a revolution in the whole empire.

Dadabhai was always ready to give everyone his due. Indeed, he was sometimes blamed for overdoing it in case of British people and officials. While condemning Lord Curzon, he recalled that the Viceroy had claims to the gratitude of the people for what he had done during the early period of his administration.

I will certainly mention one circumstance in his favour and to his credit. He made a very firm stand against any brutal treatment of the Indian people by Europeans and in so doing caused dissatisfaction to his own countrymen. In that he really did a service not only to India but to the whole British empire. That one act of his shall not be forgotten by Indians....

The crisis has come (continued Dadabhai), and the people and the rulers are face to face. The people have for 150 years suffered patiently, and strange to say, their patience has been made a taunt as well as viewed as a credit to them. Often I have been taunted with the fact that three hundred millions of Indians allow themselves to be governed like slaves by a handful of people. But the spell is broken. The old days have passed and the Indian of today looks at the whole position in quite a different light. Now India is becoming restless and it is desirable that the Government should at once realize it.

In order that India's restlessness may be more pronounced Dadabhai encouraged Bengal to keep up the agitation.

The responsibility and the opportunity (he said in his message to his Bengali friends, published in *The Bengalee*, January 5, 1906) that has fallen to your lot is to show that Indians have a backbone—the staying power to the last. If we can once establish this reputation, half of our fight for self-government will be fought and won. I don't care—I'm prepared for ultimate failure. Bengal may remain partitioned. The boycott may at last end, but it will be a great gain if we can once establish the character for organized union and self-sacrifice. One more important result I am looking forward to. It is the rousing up of the masses and the present is just the kind of struggle which can accomplish this object. If the people are once roused, they will always be ready to follow their leaders.

Dadabhai and Gokhale were entertained by the Indian residents in the United Kingdom on November 10, at dinner. "The Colonies were prospering with self-government," observed Dadabhai, "whereas India was perishing without it." The agitation of 52 years had not, however, altogether failed. After all, he said: "Great events have been happening abroad, Japan and Russia, and I do not think our present statesmen will shut their eyes to the obvious results of these great events. In the House of Commons I was supported by the Irish, the Radical and Democratic parties. Outside we have at present very widely the sympathy and support of the Irish and what I may comprehensively call the people's party. But I depend most of all upon what I see today before me—the union of all classes of my fellow-countrymen working together with one heart and with one mind for the



great common end. If the whole population of India said once for all that they were determined to have self-government—theirs by birth-right as well as theirs by pledge—their claim would not be and could not be made in vain.”

“Dadabhai had spoken,” said Gokhale, “with that overmastering force of conviction which comes from a lifelong and strenuous exertion on behalf of his countrymen. He is the only man who is entitled to speak in the terms in which he has addressed us. It never will be given to another—at any rate for some time to come—to occupy so large a place in the hearts of the people of India and that for more than half a century.”

Little could Gokhale or anyone else have dreamt at the moment that it would not take even two decades before there would arise another heroic son of India to fill that place, to awaken and rouse the people as he desired and to lead his countrymen manfully towards the goal of self-government—and that none other than the hero whom he and Dadabhai both admired and encouraged as the intrepid commander of the forces of Satyagraha in South Africa, the spirited young barrister of the day, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

As the tongue was alert and active, so was the pen during those years hard at work and unwearied. Scarcely a week passed when Dadabhai did not write to friends or critics or the press to criticise the administration or to ventilate a grievance or to correct a wrong impression about the national movement for self-government.

Here are a few extracts from selected communications :  
To J. E. ELLAIN

July 9, 1898

I may say this only here that when you doubt “whether India would be better off under the Government of any other European power” you do not mean that as a justification of England’s evil in India. Then also I do not know in what way or sense you use the word “better off”. In its economic condition I do not see how India can be worse off. There are some features in connection with Russia which she will make good use of in trying to make the people of India

think that some of the bad features of English rule will not exist in Russian rule. Whether Russia or other power must of necessity occupy India when England is made to leave and whether Russia by becoming worse than England will be able to maintain its power in India are all questions which time alone will solve.

### TO ROMESH DUTT

July 5, 1903

Lord George Hamilton has made a dead set to get Indians out of the higher services..... Things are growing critical. I have every fear that the attempt which Lord Lytton's Government openly made to stop Indians from competing for the Civil Service *here*, and which Lord Cranbrook nipped in the bud under Sir Erskine Perry's inspiration, will be sooner or later carried out, if the present Conservative Government continue for any length of time. *The time is come when an agitation must be begun for self-government under British paramountcy.* The work will be slow, but every effort needs to be concentrated on this purpose. At my age it will not be my lot to take any long part in this great battle—and I am, therefore, the more anxious to see that younger hands and hearts set themselves to work.

### TO WACHA

January 12, 1905

The very discontent and impatience it (the Congress) has evoked against itself as slow and non-progressive among the rising generation are among its best results or fruit. It is its own evolution and progress..... While there is great necessity for informing the people *here*, there is as much necessity that the true knowledge of their condition should widely spread among the Indian people themselves. The co-ordination of both is necessary to evolve the required revolution—whether it would be peaceful or violent. The character of this revolution will depend upon the wisdom or unwisdom of the British Government and action of the British people.

I hope the next Congress will make a strong pronouncement as to the absolute necessity of self-government as the only remedy for all India's wrongs and needs. Congress should make a clear distinction between two aspects of its duties. The one, *a complete change of policy* as speedily as possible in the more suitable way leading to self-government—this is Congress's main work—and the second, the hatefulness of the vagaries and failures of the existing administration. The most important of the two is the first.... The whole movement of the Congress must be managed to be backed by the masses.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND HUNDRY CODMAN POTTER,  
BISHOP OF NEW YORK

May 14, 1900

In a telegram from New York you are reported to have said at a meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce that "the famine was in one sense due to good government. Great Britain had stopped tribal warfare and slaughter and, in consequence, population increased". This, Sir, is the usual Anglo-Indian romance. The reality is quite different—namely, that the fundamental cause of "the extreme poverty" of Indians, with its natural consequences of famines, plagues, and every kind of misery, is the destructive system of Government of a bleeding foreign domination.

BISHOP OF NEW YORK TO DADABHAI

May 28, 1900

I am bound to add that I do not find myself in agreement with the position you maintain with reference to the English occupancy of India. There was no order, nor safety for life or property, nor freedom of person in India until England went there. As a native Indian of high rank recently said to me in Madras, "We have all that you Americans fought for—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and if British power were to take itself away from India to-morrow, we should have bloodshed, chaos and internecine warfare in endless varieties". I confess, for myself, that the people who are saved from these things should, in my judgment, pay the bill for them.

DADABHAI TO BISHOP OF NEW YORK

June 10, 1900

Both you and the Madrasi gentleman do not seem to have studied and considered the other side. I must say a few words of facts with reference to your statement that "we should pay the bill". We should pay for having been forced to pay every farthing (excepting a very few part payments for very shame) for all the wars and other circumstances from the very beginning of the English connection, for building up and maintaining the British Indian Empire entirely at our own cost and mainly with our blood.....with the reward of being reduced to helotry and beggary! We should pay for bleeding us and carrying away clean out of the country hundreds of millions and continue to drain incessantly and unceasingly, or we should pay for what the Viceroy's and Famine Commissions sanction..... We should pay for impoverishing us to an extent to which probably no nation has impoverished another! We should pay for all the consequences of such "other improvements" as famines, plagues.....and a chronic state of starvation.....! We should pay for the security of our property which, in the most

ingenious, scientific and unseen way, is taken away from us by the protectors! We should pay for the security of our lives, which are not left worth living, by providing us with starvation, famines, pestilence, etc.! We should pay for the full liberty we enjoy to starve and perish.....! We should pay for official Europeans bleeding us and non-official Europeans exploiting our land and labour and natural resources....! In short, we should pay for a destructive and dishonourable system of government violating Acts of Parliament and the most solemn pledges that ever a people gave to another.

### TO SURENDRANATH BANERJEA

I wish to write to you, and I am writing the same to Mr. Motilal Ghosh, that I am grieved to note the differences that are going on between the *Patrika* and the *Bengalee*. We cannot afford such quarrelling among themselves.

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY NEWS"

April 17, 1905

In a memorandum of a few statements in the Report of the Indian Famine Commission of 1880, which I submitted on January 4, 1881, to Lord Hartington, then Secretary of State for India, I said:

India does not get a moment to breathe or revive. "More Europeans, more Europeans" is the eternal cry, and this very report itself of the Commission is not free from it..... When any question of reform arises, the only remedy that suggests itself to British officials' minds is "Apply more European leeches, apply more European leeches."

Now the Police Commission Report is out, and other Commissions, resolutions and Reports for "Reforms" (?) (Heaven save us from those Reforms) have been coming out, with the same eternal cry, "More European leeches, more European leeches" and add to that hideous drain of £30,000,000 or more, as if India had no people of her own, and if, she had, as if they existed only to be "bled" and "plundered" with all the ghastly consequences of famine and plague—deaths of millions and starvation of scores of millions! When will this curse end!

### TO LORD GEORGE HAMILTON

February 26, 1901

Though the beloved Empress has passed away she has left her will—her greatest, her most noble and her most gracious legacy to the Indian people—worthy of herself and of the great British nation over whom she reigned..... Her son and our new Emperor thrice declared—before his very first

Council, before the world by his Proclamation issued by yourself, and before Parliament in his very first gracious speech—that he will walk in his good mother's steps. Who now is to be executor of that gracious and glorious will? She prayed: "And may the God of all power grant to us and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people". And who are those who are in authority under us? You are the head of those who are under such authority..... Will you rise to the height of this great and glorious responsibility and opportunity?

Hopes blighted by the bureaucracy were once more revived by the message given by King Edward VII, which formed the theme of another letter sent by Dadabhai to *The Tribune* and *The Morning Leader* (February 22, 1906):

Reading yesterday's proceedings in Parliament I may venture to say that there is and there has been for a long long time, a subject of far more serious importance, namely, that under British rule in India millions and millions of human beings are perishing by famine and plague. Would British instincts and sense of duty, conscience and humanity ever lead to deal with the true remedy....? By a divine and blessed inspiration the King himself unconsciously speaks the true and only remedy.\*

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\*This refers to the hope expressed by King Edward VII that in the South African Colonies as elsewhere throughout his dominions the grant of free institutions would be followed by an increase of prosperity.



## CHAPTER XIX

### TO THE HELP OF INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

**S**OUTH AFRICA was the El Dorado of European settlers during the middle of the nineteenth century. They had all they wanted except efficient local labour. The British planters in Natal, therefore, approached the Government of India for the supply of Indian labour. On the day the first batch of indentured labourers from Calcutta and Madras set their feet on the soil of Natal (November 16, 1860) the seeds of discord and disunion between the European and Indian population in South Africa were sown.

Most of the labourers set up, after having served their term, as agriculturists, small craftsmen or traders. This was not what the white colonists had looked for. If India continued to pour into the colonies even a few thousand persons every year, where would they stand within a few years? "Away with the Asiatic", therefore, became their watchword.

Drastic laws were rushed through, requiring Indians settling in the colonies for purposes of trade to register on payment of heavy fees and debarring them from holding land. Where this disability was removed, Indians were allowed to own immovable property only in such locations as were set apart specially for their residence, away from the towns, with no water supply, no sanitary conveniences and no lighting arrangements. Trade jealousy was the main cause of such treatment, but it was sought to be justified on "urgent sanitary grounds".

There was no political agitator in the Indian community then to rouse it against the deprivation of liberty and imposition of disabilities repugnant to the spirit of British citizenship. Nevertheless some of the spirited Indians resident in the colonies were determined to resist such restrictions on their rights of citizenship. They approached

Dadabhai. He took up the matter with Lord Ripon, then Colonial Secretary. The problem required delicate handling. The South African Republic being an independent State, the disabilities could only be removed by negotiation and diplomatic pressure on the authorities. It had been repeatedly impressed upon those authorities by the Colonial Office that it was the desire of the British Government that the Queen's Indian subjects should be treated on a footing of equality with her other subjects. The statesmen in power were, however, in no mood to listen until there appeared on the scene an intrepid Indian who taught his countrymen in that far-off land the secret of soul-force in winning a victory for the truth without recourse to violence.

It was a purely professional engagement that took Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, bar-at-law, then unknown to fame, to South Africa in April 1893. He was so disgusted with the indignities he had to put up with as an Indian during the journey to his destination that his first impulse was to quit the God-forsaken place. But how could he return to India without fulfilling the professional engagement? While he was still undecided, he was pushed out of the railway train one night by a police constable at Maritzburg. Late that night he came to the conclusion that it would be cowardice on his part to hasten back to India. Pocketing further insults, he reached Pretoria and was engrossed in professional work.

Thereafter, while he was preparing to return to India, Gandhi was informed that the Government of Natal was about to introduce a Bill to disfranchise Indians. They requested him to stay a little longer and help them in resisting this additional encroachment on their rights. The budding patriot agreed and founded the Natal Indian Congress.

Weekly letters were written by Gandhi to Dadabhai as member and to William Wedderburn as Chairman of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. Dadabhai had been his *dada* ever since he had taken a letter of introduction to him when he had gone to England

in 1888 to become a barrister. It was therefore natural he should look to him to guide and help him in carrying on the crusade on which he had embarked. Several Indian traders and their lawyers also wrote to Dadabhai, soliciting his intervention, and he attended scrupulously to all such representations made to him. For two years Dadabhai was in constant communication with the Colonial authorities, but to no purpose. Gandhi paid a visit to India. The propaganda he carried on and his speeches and pamphlets created a profound impression on the public in all principal cities. A memorial, drawn up by Pherozeshah Mehta, the Lion of India, and prominent Congressman at the time, was sent to Lord George Hamilton in December 1896. All that, however, did not stop the legislative machinery in South Africa from turning out obnoxious pieces of legislation. Dadabhai felt that his role in this affair was purely that of a postman carrying communications from South African correspondents to the British authorities. But he was more than a letter-carrier; he was also an ardent advocate exhorting the authorities to do everything possible in the matter.

It was characteristic of Gandhi that despite his struggle with the authorities he raised a Stretcher Bearer Corps for service with the Natal troops when the Zulu rebellion broke out. The Corps was in active service for a month when urgent messages took Gandhi forthwith to Transvaal, which had then become the storm centre of South Africa. From Johannesburg, he wrote to Dadabhai several letters regarding fresh developments. Dadabhai passed on all communications ploddingly to the Colonial authorities. Meanwhile storm clouds gathered over the horizon. The Indian community in South Africa was incensed over a draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance requiring every Indian, man, woman or child, to register his or her name with the Registrar of Asiatics and to take out a certificate of registration. The Registrar was to note down important marks of identification upon the applicant's person, and to take his finger and thumb impressions. Failure to apply for

registration was made an offence punishable with fine, imprisonment or deportation, within the discretion of the Court.

Irritating as was the requisition for the registration of even women and children, the requirements regarding complete finger-prints, as though they were criminals, was the most obnoxious. "If any one came forward to demand a certificate from my wife," said one of the prominent members of the Indian community in the Transvaal, at a meeting held to discuss the situation, "I would shoot him on the spot and take the consequences." It was resolved not to submit to the Ordinance if it became law and to start passive resistance, should all constitutional remedies fail. A deputation consisting of Gandhi and H. O. Ally proceeded to England. They met Dadabhai and through him were introduced to the British Committee of the Congress.

A first-class crisis had arisen. Tired of fruitless petitioning, the Indian community had decided to offer passive resistance to the Transvaal Government. Dadabhai welcomed the decision. The deputation waited on Lord Elgin and Lord Morley. They could not, however, offer anything more concrete than assurances of goodwill. The Asiatic Registration Act was rushed through all its stages at a single sitting of the Transvaal Parliament on March 21, 1907.

In his Presidential Address to the Calcutta Congress in December 1906 Dadabhai took the earliest opportunity to stir the whole of India to do everything possible to help the unhappy settlers in South Africa. He commended to the serious notice of the people of India the problem of the treatment of British Indians in South Africa. India thereafter kept the problem in the forefront for several years. Even during his retirement the troubles of Indians in South Africa preyed on Dadabhai's mind and he took every opportunity to enlist India's sympathy in the struggle.

The orderly, non-violent and chivalrous Satyagraha campaign launched under Gandhi's leadership extorted the admiration even of the Transvaal authorities. They relented

in the middle of the year 1914 and the dispute was settled to the satisfaction of the forces of Satyagraha. Dadabhai saw in it justification of his lifelong contention in regard to the Indian struggle with the British authorities that there was no such thing in this ever-changing world as a settled fact and that persistent agitation in a righteous cause must wear out all impediments. The victorious general of the campaign returned to India, where within a short time he was to be the hero of a still more stupendous Satyagraha struggle for achieving self-government for the people.



## CHAPTER XX

### SWARAJ

**C**OMPLETION of twenty-one years of its existence was for the Congress an occasion for stock-taking. During the period, had India obtained her birth-right? If not, asked Young India, had not the policy of the elders failed? Was not the advanced school of politicians justified in condemning it as a mendicant policy? They demanded a radical change in the ideals, policy and methods of work of the Congress. The "old world politicians", however, went their own way.

This antithesis between their viewpoints marked a revolutionary change in the mind of the rising generation. It was not a mere emotional conflict nor was it a contest for power. It was essentially an intellectual conflict, a conflict of ideology. Self-government under British paramountcy was the goal of the old school, freedom from foreign control was the ideal of the new. Constitutional agitation was the accepted method to which the elders wished to adhere; the rebels demanded a radical change in that method. To the ruling class and the European community generally this revolutionary attitude caused no little concern. Heretofore they had affected supreme unconcern about the fulminations of a few extremists and other demonstrations of political unrest in the country. They could not now afford to ignore the striking change that had come over the country. The agitation of the Congress in the past, though provoking, had been practically harmless as its leaders had amazingly adhered to the policy of loyalty to the Crown and constitutional methods. There was no menace to the British rule in that sort of agitation, but the young rebels seemed bent on subversive activities. Even they, except a few rabid revolutionaries among them, did not advocate violence at that stage. There was, however, such

a weapon as boycott to which they thought they could resort—boycott of British goods and, if necessary, of the councils. Without going beyond the law they could bring the authorities to their knees by refusing to associate themselves with the administration and by withholding from Government all voluntary and honorary service; and they defied any one to say that their ideal was not legitimate or that their method was not constitutional.

The day for the election of the President of the Congress for the year 1906 was drawing nearer. Who should be the President was the question on which a battle royal was expected between the extremists and the moderates. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who had suffered imprisonment in his fight for freedom of expression, was the choice of the extremists. The moderates, however, were not enamoured of the agitation carried on by the Maharashtrian hero. A brain wave of two of their leaders, Surendranath Banerjea and Bhupendranath Basu, enabled them to forestall the move. They sent a cable to Dadabhai inquiring whether he would accept the appointment, if offered. They felt confident that no one, not even the most rabid extremist, would oppose the nomination of one who was universally adored as the Grand Old Man of India, having to his credit an unparalleled record of lifelong patriotic service and self-sacrifice, whose word carried unequalled authority and who alone could be expected at that critical juncture in the history of the Congress to succeed in bringing together the two contending parties.

The weather-beaten pilot over whose head storms of over four score years had swept, but who was still a young man at eighty-one, promptly replied that he would accept the office, although it meant endangering his health and involved the still greater risk of offending one party or the other or both and risking his reputation as the Nestor of Indian politics! Thus outwitted, the Tilakites acquiesced in the election of Dadabhai at the Calcutta session as President of the Congress for the third time. Even from their view-point no better choice could have been made, as of all

members of the Congress outside the extremists' camp, he occupied a position nearest to the advanced wing of the national organization. Belonging to neither party, he had never wavered during the few preceding years in speaking out the language of his heart in condemning the policy of the rulers. Invariably his words breathed fire. For instance, speaking at the Newington Reform Club, he said that they were told that the British had introduced security of property, but that it was only in order that they might carry it away with perfect security. As to the security of life, it was said that the oriental despots used to kill thousands and thousands and harass the people. If that was so, said Dadabhai, "the British Government, with great ingenuity and scientific precision, was killing millions by famines and plagues and starving scores of millions. . . . . The Anglo-Indians or the British were like clever surgeons who, with the sharpest scalpels, cut to the very heart, and drew every drop of blood without leaving a scar."

Again in a letter to *The Daily News* dated April 21, 1905, he asked an English correspondent: "Suppose by some mischance England came under French or German or some alien despotic government, would he not, as an Englishman, do his utmost to throw off 'the heaviest of all yokes', the yoke of the stranger, even though all Englishmen were full of all the faults which the Anglo-Indians, rightly or wrongly, ascribe to the Indians? Will he not as an Englishman at once tell me: 'Corrupt or not corrupt, faults or no faults, a Briton shall never be a slave'? And yet he coolly justifies and assumes the right divine of making other people slaves!"

For more than three years Dadabhai had been proclaiming that self-government was the only remedy for the ills of India. In a message to Gokhale on the eve of the 1905 Congress, he had stated that no palliative of any kind whatever, no mere alteration of and tinkering at the machinery of administration could or would do any good. The extremists had, therefore, every reason to hope that if he

had gone so far in the year 1905 in asserting the birth-right of his countrymen, he might in 1906 go a step further.

The keynote of Dadabhai's address at the Calcutta Congress, the largest political gathering witnessed in India until then, was Swaraj. It was the first occasion when the demand for self-government was formulated and put forward from the platform of the Congress. The whole country was thrilled. It was the first session of the national organization after its coming of age. It was time, said the revered Dada of the nation to the audience, to consider what their future should be. Were they British citizens or not? The moment Indians had come under the British flag, they had become free British citizens and their rights as such were beyond question. They had every reason to claim all such rights as their birth-right and also as rights solemnly pledged to them. "Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments and details was in the hands of the people of that country, so should it be", said he, "in India. As in the United Kingdom and the Colonies all taxation and legislation and all power of spending the taxes were in the hands of the representatives of the people, so should it be in India, and the financial relations between England and India must be adjusted on a footing of equality".

He was not asking for any favour. He was pleading for justice. The whole matter, he said, could be compressed in one word, "self-government"—Swaraj—like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies. The whole machinery of government could not, certainly, be broken up and the system of self-government introduced forthwith. The time had, however, arrived for the transfer of power to begin.

Coming to the crucial question of methods, he proceeded to give a full and frank exposition of the problem as he visualized it:

Since my early efforts I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel..... But I have not despaired..... You may think it strange. I

stand before you with hopefulness. I have not despaired for one reason and I am hopeful for another reason. I have not despaired under the influence of the good English word, which has been the rule of my life. That word is 'persevere'..... As we proceed, we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage but persevere we must to the end. Now the reason of my hopefulness after all my disappointments. And this also under the influence of one word, 'Revival'—the present revival of the true old spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions in the hearts of the leading statesmen of the day..... Within the short life that may be yet vouchsafed to me, I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable, and conscientious adoption of the policy of self-government for India—and a beginning made at once towards that end.

Turning to the burning question of the day, partition of Bengal, he characterized it as a "bad blunder for England." He hoped it would be rectified. Swadeshi existed in Bombay for many years. "I am a free trader", he said. "I am a member and in the Executive Committee of the Cobden Club for twenty years, and yet I saw that Swadeshi is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle. As long as the economic condition remains unnatural and impoverishing.....the talk of applying economic laws to the condition of India is adding insult to injury."

The address ended with a fervent plea for unity :

I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen, I say: "Be united, persevere and achieve self-government so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine and plague, and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved, and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilized nations of the world.

It was meant to be, and was in fact a conciliatory speech. Strongly controversial topics such as Swadeshi were disposed of in a few words. "Boycott" was not even mentioned. It was not quite clear where Dadabhai stood or how far he would allow the advanced wing of the Congress to go. It had not got what it wanted. Instead of recommending any change in methods and tactics, Dadabhai had simply asked his countrymen once more to have faith in the British people's sense of justice. He had held



out hopes in the revival of Liberalism in England, whereas India had abandoned hopes of getting redress even at the hands of the Liberal Party. On the other hand, the moderates were pleased. *The Bengalee* hailed the address as "the political gospel for the new era", while *Bande Mataram* shed tears on "the great refusal". To the Anglo-Indian community and the press, Swaraj had always been a nightmare. The presidential address was, therefore, considered a surrender to the extremists.

During the meeting of the Subjects Committee there were violent scenes over the refusal to submit resolutions for extending boycott all over India. Some of the extremists left the meeting, headed by Bepin Chandra Pal and Khaparde. There was, for a while, jubilation in the camp of Anglo-Indians hostile to the Congress, but those who welcomed the split were amazed to find a display of unanimity at the final session. There was heated discussion, no doubt, on the resolution moved by Ambica Charan Mazumdar, seconded by Pal, that the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal, by way of protest against the partition of that Province, "was and is legitimate". The extremists put their own interpretation on the resolution, claiming that it applied to the whole country, but the moderates interpreted it as confined to Bengal only.

A united front had, however, to be presented to the world outside. Tilak had the patriotism and the statesmanship to realize it. Despite his disappointments he struck a refreshing note of unity. Supporting the Swadeshi resolution, he said he was glad that they had arrived at a satisfactory solution because their Anglo-Indian friends had predicted that the twenty-second Congress would meet with premature death immediately after the attainment of the age of majority. The prediction, however, had been falsified under the able, impartial and judicious guidance of the veteran leader in the chair. All differences, continued Tilak, had been squared; both parties had approached the question in a spirit of conciliation and met half-way.

## CHAPTER XXI

### RETURN HOME

“I AM in the best of the health”, was Dadabhai’s reply to a question put to him concerning his health by a representative of *The Tribune* who had called on him on his birthday on September 4, 1906. “I am a little uncomfortable,” he added, “at having to wear a Russell cord coat when I would prefer a muslin jacket, with a shirt of the same material. Otherwise I should love this heat, which is reminiscent of my own country.”

“To what do you attribute your good condition ?” asked the journalist.

“To life long abstinence,” said Dadabhai, “to avoiding tobacco, to eschewing spices and condiments and to working hard. I breakfast at 8.30 a.m. Then I write at home until it is time to go to the office. From 11 until 7.45 I labour there, after which I dine. I walk for about an hour and then continue my work until midnight.”

Such a picture of health he then looked despite the stress and strain and wear and tear of more than fifty years of strenuous public life that the friends and admirers of the G.O.M. fervently hoped and prayed that he might live to be a centenarian. An echo of their sentiments on the occasion was heard in the following stanzas in *India* :

A harvest full, its seed long sown  
Be yours ere life be done!  
Hopes ne’er proved vain that steadfast hold  
At fourscore years and one.  
In heart and mind unchanged, tho’ past  
Life’s allotted span,  
We wish an honoured century  
For India’s Grand Old Man!

In such good health the P. & O. Company’s steamship *Arcadia* had carried the President-elect of the Congress to India in the middle of December 1906. With his mission at Calcutta creditably accomplished he returned to London

on February 8, 1907, little dreaming that the strain of that mission would prove too great for a frame enfeebled though imperceptibly. He was not the same young man at eighty-one that he was before he had embarked on his voyage to Bombay. The youthful vigour and energy had suddenly gone—gone beyond recall.

Soon after his arrival in London he had an attack of bronchitis, which persisted and caused great anxiety to his friends. There was a slight recovery in the first week of March; on April 26 *India* announced the cheering news that the patient had greatly improved in health. A change at Bexhill-on-Sea led to further improvement. His medical advisers were, however, of opinion, and it was also the wish of his British friends, that he should retire from public life and spend his last days in his motherland, for the good of which he had spent the best strength of his life, there to be supported by the tenderness and care of his dear ones and cheered by the love and blessings of his countrymen. "And it is in India you should die," wrote Birdwood. "That will give the necessary dramatic unity to your life, that dramatic emphasis to your life's work—that returning to die, and dying in your motherland—in the arms of your Earth Mother—that set the seal to your service, devotion and inflexible loyalty to India." Dadabhai, however, felt that his work for the country had not yet been completed. He had just launched the crusade for self-government and he was loath to leave his place in the fighting line before even a single decisive battle had been won.

In August there was a set-back. Astrologers in India then commenced enthusiastically studying the horoscope of the sage. One of them gave him a further lease of life for seven years. The forecast was duly conveyed to Dadabhai. It appeared to be correct for the moment but at the end of the seventh year it turned out to be wrong as Dadabhai then seemed to be good for a further lease of seven years at least. When the patient was regarded fit for a voyage to India it was decided that he should leave London within a couple of weeks. His strong will-power and

disposition displayed themselves at their best during this illness.

On October 12, 1907, the day fixed for embarkation, the weather-gods were exceptionally propitious. Whereas during the preceding days the weather had been stormy, chilly and changeable, on the day of departure the sun shone brightly with the warmth of a mid-September day. Dadabhai was taken in an easy-running motor car to Tilbury, and transferred to his berth in the *S. S. Moldavia* under the care of Dr. Treasurywalla and a trained nurse.

The members of the London Indian Society assembled at the pier to present a farewell address to him. As, however, it would have been an ordeal to him to receive the address that they wished to present to him, and to reply to it, the address was received on his behalf by his grandson Jal Naoroji. Although he was leaving England for good, the members of the Society desired that he should continue to be its President. Dadabhai could not agree. Thereupon they pressed him to accept the office of Honorary President. Dadabhai agreed, but not without hesitation. He had seen not a few Indian youths in England as well as in Calcutta bent on revolt. They looked upon violence as the only effective weapon of political protest. He feared that the gospel of violence would spread all over India and that its protagonists would capture the Society. Unburdening his mind to his successor, J. M. Parikh, and obtaining an undertaking from him that the moment the Society countenanced violence his name should be struck off the roll, he acquiesced. "My honour", he added, "is in your hands."

With these parting words disappeared from English public life the illustrious Indian who had spent himself in his country's service. During half a century he had incessantly grappled with hard facts and figures concerning the woeful condition of his country and presented them to the British public, as none before him had done, and had done everything possible to bring England and India together. A glowing tribute paid to him by Wedderburn

on the occasion was accorded a prominent place in the *Daily News* of October 17 :

Last Friday, at the age of eighty-three, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji said good-bye to England for the last time, and sailed for India. The sands of life running very low, his heart worn out with many wars and eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot stars, what his feelings now may be I know not, but for half a century he has kept alive among Indians the belief that in the end England will be true to her own best traditions ; that she will make of India a trusted partner, instead of a bond slave. . . . . Like Edmund Burke, he has never lost faith in the 'ancient and inbred integrity' of the British people.

Birdwood also took the opportunity to give expression to his admiration of the work accomplished by Dadabhai, in a letter which he wrote to the London correspondent of *The Times of India* :

Dadabhai Naoroji is a man in whom mind has the complete mastery of matter and who, it might be said, cannot be killed until he no longer desires to live. . . . . In all my visits to him he has shown no thought of himself; all his thoughts, with all their clearness, insight and interests and play of dialectics and fancy, have been on his life's work, which seems ever before him, as not knowing a past or a future, but only an abiding present. And so, sitting and talking with him, one feels of him that even in the article of death, it would not be the death of what was really and truly Dadabhai Naoroji, but translation—a quick shift to immortal conditions.

Arriving in Bombay, he was taken quietly to his house at Versova. The first greeting he received was from the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke (afterwards Lord Sydenham). Soon thereafter the people of India heard with great satisfaction that Dadabhai had recovered completely from his illness. With health regained his mind became as agile and his pen as active, vigorous and alert as before.

"My correspondence with India is enormous," said Dadabhai to the representative of *The Tribune* in the course of the interview referred to above. It was truly Cyclopean when he was in England in active public life and it continued to be so in India even after he was supposed to have retired from active life. In England, in addition to the usual daily political and business correspondence, he received every week from his daughters,



grand-daughters and sons-in-law, scattered over different places in India and England, their weekly budgets of news concerning their studies, or other avocations, their needs and their amusements, their hopes and aspirations, accompanied, in the case of the grown-up children, with statements of accounts, and he replied to them regularly, expressing his joy or concern regarding the progress made by each and commenting on other incidents in their lives. In addition, he carried on a lengthy correspondence with the teachers of his grandchildren from whom, too, he received periodical returns and reports indicating the progress made by their pupils in different subjects. Such domestic correspondence was, however, nothing compared with the miscellaneous correspondence entailed by inquiries and appeals, congratulations and greetings, coming from individuals and institutions from the four corners of the world.

In view of his unique position as an unofficial ambassador of India in England and the reputation he had for self-sacrificing service in any good cause, he received almost daily a number of appeals from individuals and institutions for help and guidance in numerous directions. Young men desiring to go to Europe from India or Africa for study or business, students stranded in England or other parts of Europe, parents of young men who after or before completing their studies were in no mood to return home, Indian women deserted by Indian husbands, European women who had married good-for-nothing Asiatics, fathers and mothers horrified at the news of conversion of their sons to Christianity, all sought his help. Similarly Englishmen and Englishwomen in distress, or interested in welfare work, approached him almost daily for help.

It was a point of honour with him to acknowledge all communications and to comply with as many appeals as he could. Even if he could not render any assistance, he would put in a word of sympathy. Prisoners sentenced to death, or imprisonment, on charges of arson or murder or cheating, dismissed employees, ill-treated workmen, hard-worked postmen, dissatisfied contractors, duped business

men, European and Indian, all appealed to Dadabhai for redress. The petitions of several of them were presented by him, or through his good offices by others, to the Home Department, or to the Colonial Office, and even questions were asked on their behalf in the House of Commons. Each case entailed wearisome correspondence, but Dadabhai never grudged the time, trouble and expense involved. Among such cases there was one concerning a man in Teheran, who complained that he had been wrongfully dismissed from the Telegraph service and asked Dadabhai to approach, on his behalf, John Morley or Edward Grey for justice !

Any request, emanating from any quarter, concerning the higher education or industrial training of Indian youths, or the political education of old or young, was welcome to Dadabhai. Knowing his willingness and readiness to help in such cases, people demanded all sorts of information and assistance from him. One student asked for particulars concerning available posts in banks ; the father of another informed Dadabhai that "the nuptial ceremonies in connection with the second marriage" of his son had just been consummated at Ahmedabad, and he wished to know the way in which assistant engineers were recruited for service. There was, however, nothing frivolous about most of the requisitions. They satisfied the patriotic impulse of the man to whom they were addressed. For instance, the Government of Travancore sent two graduates for Associateship in Geology and Mining, and asked Dadabhai to help them and to keep an eye on them. Indians in South Africa and Indian students in Japan asked for Congress literature and other particulars. There was a constant flow of appeals for "some clement showers of generosity and benevolence", most of which he was obliged to turn down, but not infrequently young Indians succeeded in borrowing from him small loans which were advanced with practically no hope of recovery.

The pressure of daily correspondence in India till the end of his life was also enormous. An undergraduate from

Agra College, son of a rich zamindar, but victim of a step-mother's wiles, wrote to him : "A sum of Rs. 300 will easily enable me to pass my B.A. Half of the above sum I can easily manage by selling my mare, which was given to me on my marriage, but for the remaining half I must depend upon you."

Another, who described himself as "a native of Bombay, who has received a liberal education and is acquainted with the theory of carriage-building", wished to be enlightened on several points regarding facilities in London or any province in India to learn the trade. A journalist in Mirzapur wanted answers to more than fifty queries regarding the balances kept by Government in England and India, the creation of a Central Bank in India, the reasons for and against its establishment, the conditions under which it should operate, the methods of meeting capital expenditure, the sale of Council bills, the exchange value of the rupee, level of prices, gold standard reserve, paper currency reserve, purchases of silver, hoarding, and "financial organization and procedure generally." To all such communications, replies, however brief, were sent, and they were mostly in Dadabhai's hand. Authors sent him their books soliciting his opinion, editors of journals asked for articles, and not a few individuals wrote long letters merely to air their views on current political and economic problems. To one such dilettante from North Kanara, Dadabhai had to write (December 13, 1913) :

As in the present state of my age and condition of health I am not able to devote much attention to public questions, you need not trouble yourself to write to me about them, especially in matters of details of existing administration.

Several people who sent him letters of congratulations on his birthday from different parts of India, China, Japan, Africa, and England, also appeared to have given little thought to his advanced age. They wrote sheets and sheets about themselves or public affairs. Till the last moment, however, when he became quite disabled, Dadabhai attended to all such correspondence personally, as may be gathered

from the office copies of replies left behind in his own steady, unwearied hand.

A fairly large portion of the correspondence was, however, of his own seeking. The early days of his retirement were stirring days. Things were moving rapidly. Anarchical activities were increasing. Anti-British feeling was growing, and angry cries from Anglo-Indian circles for stern reprisal also increased in proportion. Uninfluenced by the attitude of one section or the other, Lord Morley and Lord Minto were determined to concede as far as possible the new aspirations stirring the people generally. Reforms were on the anvil. At such a critical moment in the political history of the country, how could the originator of the agitation for reform and father of Indian nationalism remain silent?

## CHAPTER XXII

### RETIREMENT COVERED WITH GLORY

THE bark of Indian politics appeared to be drifting into stormy waters throughout the year 1908. There was a split in the Congress. The national organization was in imminent danger of being captured by the extremist section. Two different types of unrest worried the authorities—one, the unrest of loyal subjects dissatisfied with the rulers for their failure to discharge their obligations to the people; the other, the unrest fomented by doctrines subversive of order and threatening the basis of constitutional government. The outbursts that followed were met by Government with repression, but repression engendered fresh forces of disorder.

The Radical of one generation is apt to become the Tory of the next and to look askance at the forward movement of that generation. This could not be said of Dada-bhai. While the other political leaders disowned and denounced the forward section, his sympathies were with them. His hopes were centred not so much in his immediate followers as in the youth of the country stirred by national consciousness and patriotic fervour. At the same time, he stoutly deprecated violence. In his message of thanks to his countrymen for the numerous proofs of their goodwill, he stated :

I take this opportunity to entreat that all resort to violence should be avoided. Our grievances are many. Maintain the struggle for essential reforms, with necessary endeavours and self-sacrifice, peacefully, patiently and perseveringly and appeal without fear or faltering to the conscience and righteousness of the British nation.

This message heralded, so to say, the rebirth of Dada-bhai's political life. He was now fit physically and mentally to follow with interest the progress of events in the country and to express his views and exert his influence.

The Morley-Minto Reforms, insignificant though they



might appear to be to-day, marked the first step taken by the authorities along the path of justice. Dadabhai thought it politic to encourage the statesmen who had taken that step, and to indicate what as yet remained to be accomplished. Long personal letters were written to Morley and Minto, expressing satisfaction but pointing out at the same time that the fundamental reform, the holding of simultaneous examinations in India and England for admission to the Civil Service, had still been overlooked. In a lengthy appendix he gave extracts from the speeches and writings of British statesmen and administrators from 1764 to 1903. The letter and the appendices covered eighty type-written foolscap sheets!

In the following year was issued from the sanctum of the political recluse another prodigious communication dealing with the financial aspect of the problem of system of administration and giving tables compiled from official records. Three months later, a further letter, giving trade statistics and other details, was sent to complete the picture of the condition of India under foreign domination. These epistles and the appendices attached to them made up, one might say, an abridged edition of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, revised up to date and annotated in the light of events subsequent to its compilation!

The extremists regarded the reforms as a concession to violence. Further reforms, they believed, could only be wrung from unwilling hands by further violence. Dadabhai, therefore, reverted to his counsel of non-violence. In his eighty-fifth birthday message he said:

Last year I entreated my countrymen "that all resort to violence should be avoided". Since then a most deplorable outrage has taken place in the assassination of Sir Curzon Wyllie—who was a friend to Indians, and that when we were already beginning to obtain reforms. It is only a sad consolation that another Indian, D. Lalkaka, (who rushed to the rescue of the victim) redeemed the Indian character with his life. Those who resort to violence inflict the greatest possible injury on the Indian cause.

The anarchists of the day were forging ahead. Dadabhai had therefore to repeat, in his manifesto of 1910, his

appeal to desist from violence. A few notable letters of the period may be quoted.

"I met the South African Mr. Gandhi last summer", said Dadabhai's grand-daughter Mrs. M. Captain, in one of the letters. "I found him an extremely interesting and sincere man. He simply worships you. I had a very long talk with him about the organization of the agitation in South Africa and all he said about it was that they had your example before them and they were following it with perfect faith."

Dadabhai wrote in reply that he was very glad she had met "Mr. Gandhi, a very good man", who had been "fighting a great patriotic battle".

No detail concerning the Congress escaped Dadabhai's notice during his retirement. "My congratulations", said he in a letter to Lala Harkisanlal (January 6, 1910) "for the success of the Congress. Punjab has vindicated its character for stalwartness."

In connection with the same session he had written to Surendranath Banerjea (October 10, 1899) :

I am glad you have exhorted a large attendance at the next Congress. Mr. Wacha sent me a message from you when you were in Bombay about simultaneous examination. Write to me fully what it is. I hope you will do your utmost at the Congress to give prominence to the reform for simultaneous examinations for all the Indian services. In the Congress of 1906 in Resolution 9 it was section (a) which is still not attended to by Lord Morley.

Another letter from Dadabhai's solicitor, Frank Birdwood, gives a glimpse into the study of the political recluse :

I am sending by separate post the U.S.A. statistics. They are dull reading to most of us, but I know that you will be able to extract pleasure and profit for all.

The stuff with which he was feeding his mind during those days is furnished by Dadabhai's own letter to the Thakore Saheb of Gondal :

Thanks for sending me the Administration Report for 1908-9. Kindly send me also reports for the two previous years. I have been seeing cuttings from the Press as I come across them.

On his return from England, Surendranath Banerjee had said years ago, "Dadabhai is living in a sea of blue-books." This was equally true of his retreat at Versova.

On the occasion of the visit of King George V to India, Dadabhai took the opportunity to stress his thesis that the King's desire to give the Indian people the blessings of peace and prosperity could only be attained by giving self-government to India. It was only natural for him to expect that, while political conditions were changing all over the world and while the internal conditions in India were also changing, the Government of India could not alone refuse to move with the times. The fault, he believed, was in the head, not in the heart. Lord Hardinge had brought about a change in the mind; already a friendly policy was being evolved, leading to complete autonomy in provincial affairs. The fates, however, appeared to be against a peaceful approach to the cherished goal. To his horror Dadabhai heard of an attempt on the life of the good and great Viceroy and of Lady Hardinge at Delhi. It had a very depressing effect on him, but the appointment during the year of a Royal Commission on the Services in India filled him with hope. "I pray", said he, in his birthday manifesto, "that its work may result in securing to our country the justice that has been long delayed. It has been my life-long conviction that simultaneous examinations will furnish the only remedy for a great and just grievance."

By this time Versova had become a place of pilgrimage not only for loving and admiring Indians and Englishmen but also for the highest representatives of the Crown in India. After Sir George Clarke, Lord Hardinge, and then Lord Willingdon, honoured Dadabhai with a visit and profited by his exposition of the hopes and aspirations of the people. Such intercourse was not confined to exchange of courtesies or to sharing one another's domestic joys and sorrows. Whenever the economic or the political situation demanded it, Dadabhai carried on a vigorous correspondence with them.

On February 21, 1913, Dadabhai addressed a letter jointly to Lord Crewe and Lord Hardinge asking that the Public Services Commission then conducting its inquiry should be supplied with "information about the aspects and consequences of the economic factor of the public service" so that they might be able to realize "how much of the moisture which ought to give sustenance to the people of British India was sucked up by Europeans under the existing system of public service". In one of his speeches, Lord Hardinge had inferred from certain trade statistics that India's material condition and progress compared favourably with that of any other principal country in the world. Dadabhai lost no time in pointing out in a long letter (October 8, 1913) that the interpretation put on the figures was not correct. The subject had been dealt with by him before. India's exports brought no gain to India; it was all loss, loss, loss.

The outbreak of the War of 1914-18 elicited a stirring message from the Grand Old Man (August 10, 1914) :

The war in Europe. What is our—India's place in it?.... We are, above all, British citizens of the Great British Empire..... Fighting as the British people are at present in a righteous cause for the good and glory of human dignity and civilization and moreover, being the beneficent instrument of our own progress and civilization, our duty is clear : to do our—everyone's—best to support the British fight with our life and property.

A very interesting letter of the period (October 10) from Miss Annie Archer came as a cheering reminder of the early days spent in England.

"I read with great interest (she said) your excellent letter in *The Times*, and since then how many of your people have given their practical evidence of goodwill, and I am sure England values it very highly, especially in these terrible days. One can think, talk and read of no other subject but the war. The loss of life has been enormous and the amount of suffering not only of our men but the poor women and children is heart-rending..... I felt I should just like to send a word of remembrance to you, and I very often picture you sitting in 'Mr. Dadabhai's Chair', which is still as good as ever, in my dining-room; how often you have sat in it and told us such interesting details of your religion and customs, and how we all enjoyed your visits."

"What a fine unexpected pleasure (replied Dadabhai) to receive it from one of my earliest and best friends in England! I remember well the days of my visits, spending my evenings among the kind family of Dr. Archer, sitting in 'Dadabhai's Chair' (good chair) with Annie with a kind sisterly interest tenderly seeing to my comforts."

It was announced in September 1915 that it had been decided to start the Home Rule League in India as an auxiliary to the National Congress and its British Committee in England. Mrs. Annie Besant, who had then switched over from metaphysics to politics, was the prime mover. The simultaneous announcement that Dadabhai had consented to be the President of the League created a sensation amongst Congress circles. They considered it outrageous that another organization should be brought into being to pursue the same object which formed the principal plank in the Congress programme, namely, self-government. They suspected that the extremists would utilize it to wreck the Congress.

All the world seemed curious to know whether Dadabhai had really accepted the Presidentship of the League. It was true, said he in a statement, that he had given his consent to be President on certain conditions. One of the conditions was that he should not be called upon for any active work or for speaking or writing, as he was not competent to undertake any such work at his age. He also asked, and Mrs. Besant agreed, that the League must not be turned against the Congress. D. E. Wacha wrote that by allowing his name to be associated with the League as its President, Dadabhai was in reality assisting those who by indirect and tortuous means were trying to wreck the Congress. The veteran's rejoinder revealed the working of his mind. Although often deceived, the erstwhile Professor of Mathematics insisted till the last day of his life that every theory of suspicion should be demonstrated like a theorem in geometry before he could act on it. In this particular case he saw no reason to discountenance a movement, full of promise for the country's good, merely



because his friends suspected that its promoters would work in a manner prejudicial to the Congress.

Rather late in the day, the University of Bombay decided in 1916 to confer on Dadabhai the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. D. Mackichan, observed on the occasion :

Men of all shades of political opinion were quick to discern the transparent honesty, the simplicity of purpose, the unselfish patriotism of the man who sought to interpret to Great Britain the needs and aspirations of his countrymen. British political life is peculiarly sensitive to character. While in this University we do not concern ourselves with politics, we are deeply concerned with character, and today we pay the tribute of our admiration to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's patience under adversities and disappointments, to his unwearied perseverance in the maintenance of his convictions and to the unselfish love of his country and nation which inspired him throughout his many conflicts.

Negotiations were going on between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India for constitutional reform. It was Dadabhai's earnest wish and prayer that he might live to witness the inauguration of the Reforms. But the end came sooner than it was expected. He was taken suddenly ill, two months before the declaration of August 20, 1917, was made guaranteeing increased association of Indians in every branch of the Administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire, guaranteeing, that is to say, practically all that Dadabhai had been demanding.

After Dadabhai's body was consigned to the Tower of Silence according to Parsi rites, Narayan Chandavarkar, a great admirer of his political guru, paid a warm, affectionate tribute to the life and character of the dear departed sage of India :

If we take stock of his life and his example, may I not say with perfect justice and truth that in his career, in all he did, in all he suffered, and in all he taught, he was the Prophet Zoroaster's religion personified, because he was the man more than anybody else of pure thought, of pure speech and of pure deeds. . . . . The sun that rose, just ninety-three years ago, over India is set, but, I say, it is set to rise again

in the form of regenerated India, for Dadabhai lived and worked for us with a devotion which must remain for all of us an inspiring example.

## EPILOGUE

We have come to the end of the story of a great life nobly lived, spanning nearly a whole century, great, indeed, in the greatness of its simplicity, purity and benignity and lofty in its conception of man's mission on earth. The reforms for which he had fought on behalf of the impoverished people of India and for the rejuvenation of the country had been in the offing at the time of his death, but they marked only the first stage in the people's march towards the goal of self-government. A good deal of nation-building work yet remained to be accomplished to bring the struggle for freedom to a successful and honourable termination.

It was a matter of supreme good fortune that just at that moment another simple, selfless and high-souled son of India appeared on the scene, to pick up the thread of the work of regeneration of the country and the uplift of the people where Dadabhai had left it. That heroic man of the hour was Mahatma Gandhi, a fervent disciple of the Grand Old Man whom he adored as the man after his heart and to whom he had been drawn more and more, since he came under his spell during the time he was in South Africa, contesting valiantly the unjust laws to which the Indian community in that land was subjected. Returning to India, he devoted himself to the work of social uplift. Who could have then dreamt that he would soon plunge into politics and that of all the disciples of Dadabhai he would occupy in the hearts of the people of India the place occupied by his revered master?

Gandhiji had entered the political arena just as if there was going to be no change in objective or in principle or policy or even in the means and methods to which Dadabhai in spite of disappointments had firmly adhered. Although he was looked upon by the rulers and the public as a

revolutionary, he was simply saying and doing what Dadabhai as a constitutional fighter had said and done. When at last the incidents connected with the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy impelled him to rebel and to launch the campaign of non-co-operation and civil disobedience, he did what Dadabhai had fully anticipated during the turn of the century. The struggle that ensued was but a reminder of what he had endeavoured in warning after warning to impress on the bureaucracy in India, namely, that unless it changed its ways there would be rebellion in the country.

The more one thinks of the life and character of Bapu and Bapu's *dada*, the more one is struck by the inner likeness between the two most outstanding figures in the annals of India's constitutional progress. In spite of many differences which were on the surface, the same passionate devotion to the motherland, burning within them like a steady flame, could be seen in both alike. It never wavered, never even flickered. It was a life-long passion burning brighter and brighter as old age came on. Englishmen of high character and noble purpose were naturally attracted to Dadabhai and gave him their fullest admiration in his old age for the sterling qualities of simplicity and selflessness, truth and uprightness. So did the British friends of Mahatma Gandhi give him their unstinted admiration for the same qualities and his gospel of non-violence and soul force as they came more and more to understand it.

It was not without significance, for instance, that Dadabhai was elected, by a British constituency in London, a member of the British Parliament shortly after his severest indictment of British rule in India, embodied in his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, published by English publishers in that very city. Equally striking and gratifying it was that two of Mahatma Gandhi's valued friends when he was in the thick of his crusade against the unimaginative bureaucracy of the fourth decade of the twentieth century were General Smuts and Lord Halifax, against both of whom he had raised the standard of revolt and both of whom had put him in prison in earlier days.

Such a predicament was possible just because on both sides chivalry and generosity had not been lost in the political struggle. Therein lay the hope for the future.

Underlying this there is a moral that cannot be emphasized and cherished too dearly today when there has been a world crisis of unprecedented gravity in the history of mankind. India and Britain, wherever the highest level is reached on either side, are singularly akin. They have learnt during the past century of close contact to understand each other. Their mutual understanding grew stronger during some years before the withdrawal of British power from India and their mutual respect has since grown stronger in recent years. The struggle to attain self-rule carried with it a nobility on both sides. No doubt, much of the opposite character was also witnessed during the hours of strife. But again and again the higher note had risen above the struggle and in the end prevailed.



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